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Editor's Notebook

Things Worth Doing

In 1906, as the first tremors rippled through San Francisco, an ambitious and persistent Norwegian explorer named Roald Amundsen, a man who had already sailed the Antarctic, guided his ship *Gjoa* into the northern ice, found the long sought after Northwest Passage, and incidentally fixed the magnetic North Pole. *The Jungle,* Upton Sinclair's graphic and brutal exposé of the meatpacking industry, made people think twice about what they were eating and raked in a great deal of money, though Sinclair quickly blew most of it on a socialist utopian community in Englewood, New Jersey. Young Henry Louis Mencken, who enjoyed the news business as few people have before or since, and who, two years earlier, had watched the Great Baltimore Fire creep right up to his office windows, saw his beloved *Baltimore Herald* slide quietly out of business. He then took a job as Sunday editor at the *Baltimore Sun,* forever changing Baltimore papers and leaving an indelible mark on Western Civilization. A fellow Baltimorean Mencken knew of but did not know well, Joseph "Baby Joe" Gans, he of the dazzling footwork and lightning fists, slugged and danced his way through a monumental forty-two round prize fight in Nevada and walked away with eleven thousand dollars, the biggest purse he would ever win. He then opened a hotel to bring black celebrities and sporting heroes to Baltimore. In that city, too, a small journal began its existence with the genteel announcement: "The Maryland Historical Society announces to its members and the public, the establishment . . . of a quarterly magazine of history under the title of the *Maryland Historical Magazine.*"

Judge Albert Ritchie opened the first issue with an account of the "Early County Seats of Baltimore County," but it was not long before things turned more serious and Dr. Albert Kimberley Hadel was setting matters straight regarding the Battle of Bladensburg. General W. P. Craighill, perhaps with the recently concluded Russo-Japanese War in mind, reviewed Baltimore's shore defenses. Henry F. Thompson recounted the exploits of a pirate in the Chesapeake Bay, and the magazine's distinguished editor, William Hand Browne, who also edited the *Archives of Maryland,* serialized the log Thomas Boyle, Baltimore's greatest privateer captain, had written aboard the *Chasseur,* Baltimore's greatest privateer. Society vice president Thompson also contributed a piece on Richard Ingle and the plundering time.

The new historical journal had close ties to the history it published. Among the articles in that first volume were papers that had been read before the society decades before: "Early Missions among the Indians" (B. U. Campbell, 1846), "Historic Portraits of Maryland" (Frank B. Mayer, 1891), "Reminiscences of Baltimore in 1824" (John H. B. Latrobe, 1890), and "Strategy of the Sharpsburg Campaign"

(W. Allan, formerly Chief Ordnance Officer, Army of Northern Virginia, 1888). Inclusion of the latter is especially unsurprising, since aiding Browne on the Committee on Addresses and Literary Entertainments was Andrew C. Trippe, who had charged up Culp's Hill with the Confederate 2d Maryland and whose descendants later left the society a small envelope containing, as a penciled notation stated, "My Bones, Gettysburg." Among those overseeing membership was McHenry Howard, who had fought under Stonewall Jackson and been wounded at Spottsylvania Court House.

The *Maryland Historical Magazine*, this combination of amateur and professional scholars, active, participatory readers (and hard-working editors), is now ninety-nine years old. It has witnessed many changes, including a technological one: We hope to have much of the magazine available online, perhaps this year, so that those early volumes will once more be within reach.

Meanwhile, to mark its centennial, the board of editors has assembled a celebratory volume. We have spent the better part of the year going over a century of Maryland written history with the view of presenting "the best of the *MdHM*" in four issues, beginning in the spring. Articles have been chosen with a view toward giving modern readers a sense of the intellectual journey we have taken. We will print extra copies of each issue and gather them at the end of the year into a single clothbound volume that we hope will last several more centuries as a tangible, long-lived tribute to the writers and past editors of this wonderful journal.

R.I.C.

In Memoriam

The Board of Editors and the staff of the *Maryland Historical Magazine* note with profound regret the passing of Nicholas Varga, Professor of History at Loyola College in Baltimore. Professor Varga, a contributor to this journal, was also the author of *Baltimore's Loyola, Loyola's Baltimore, 1851–1986* (Maryland Historical Society, 1990), which has long since sold out. In Professor Varga's passing, Maryland's historical community has lost a gentleman, a scholar, and a great friend.

Cover

"Winter on the Farm," March 1964, by *Baltimore Sun* photographer Robert Kniesche (1906–1976). (Maryland Historical Society.)

Margaret Brent pleads her case before the General Assembly in this romanticized twentieth-century painting. (Maryland Historical Society.)

"Came Mistress Margarett Brent": Political Representation, Power, and Authority in Early Maryland

NURAN ÇINLAR

> Came Mistress Margarett Brent and requested to have vote in the howse for her selfe and voyce allso for that att the last Court 3d Jan: it was ordered that the said Mistress Brent was to be lookd uppon and received as his L[ordshi]ps Attorney. The Govr. denyed that the sd. Mistress Brent should have any uote in the howse. And the sd. Mistress Brent protested agst all proceedings in this p[rese]nt Assembly, unlesse shee may be p[rese]nt and have vote as aforesd.
>
> — Friday, January 21, 1647/8. *Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly of Maryland.*[1]

Margaret Brent is best remembered as the first colonial American woman to ask for the vote. She engaged in other colorful pursuits as well, including frequent and successful litigation, adoption of an Indian girl, administering the estate of Maryland's first governor, and even acquiring power of attorney for Lord Baltimore's Maryland estate.[2] These activities round out our portrait of an intriguing figure and shape our understanding of how those activities gendered political opportunity in early Maryland. Although Brent's request for the vote remains the keystone of her public career, her work in these other cases emphasize that the request was not frivolous. Her story illuminates the very fine line separating freemen from a second, less empowered category of citizenship in seventeenth-century Maryland. An examination of the merits of her request, and the reasons for its refusal, is certainly overdue.

1. William Hand Browne, ed. *Archives of Maryland* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1883 – .), 1:215 (hereinafter cited *Arch. Md.*). Mistress is abbreviated as Mrs in the record.
2. See Julia Cherry Spruill, "Mistress Margaret Brent, Spinster," *Maryland Historical Magazine,* 29 (1934): 259–68 (hereinafter cited *MdHM*), and Spruill, *Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1938, 1972); Eudora Ramsey Richardson, "Margaret Brent—Gentleman," *Thought: A Quarterly of the Sciences and Letters,* 7 (1933): 533–

The author teaches history at Simmons College.

We can establish that Margaret Brent had considerable status in the colony by looking at the records of her immigration, land holdings, and actions in the courts, and by examining which colonists tended to be selected as executors, particularly by prominent persons. On the basis of this examination, we can then ask why Brent sought vote and voice in Maryland's General Assembly. Why freeman status and the vote would be useful to her, why she thought she would get it (if in fact she did expect to), and why she ultimately did not get the vote are the issues raised by Brent's public life. As a female, Brent could never claim freeman status, yet in 1648, she apparently believed that she had sufficiently compelling reasons to ask for the vote and saw an opportunity to receive it. Perhaps, as ideas about political representation and women's roles fluctuated in seventeenth-century Maryland, being female would no longer be a prohibiting factor. The nature, extent, and longevity of those changes are the subject of this article.

Historians have accorded Brent a full range of compliments. In 1837, John Bozman praised her for appearing "to have possessed a masculine understanding." In the 1930s Eudora Richardson termed Brent "a woman so startlingly daring as to be worthy of the title 'first modern woman in the new world.'"[3] More recently, Brent's story has been told with more restraint. A 1971 piece argued that circumstances were at least as important as Brent's personal abilities in establishing her place in Maryland's history. "Events," her entry in *Notable American Women* reads, "placed her suddenly in a position where her firm action and right judgment were critical to the fortunes of the Maryland colony." The author discounted Brent's usefulness for historians of gender and stated that although she may have

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47; Elizabeth Rigby, "Maryland's Royal Family," *MdHM*, 29 (1934): 212–23; Lois Green Carr, "Margaret Brent," entry, *Notable American Women 1607–1950: A Biographical Dictionary* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), 236–37; Anton-Hermann Chroust, *The Rise of the Legal Profession in America*, Volume I, *The Colonial Experience* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965); Mathew Page Andrews, *History of Maryland: Province and State* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1929); John Leeds Bozman, *The History of Maryland: Its First Settlement, in 1633, to the Restoration, in 1660, with a Copious Introduction, and Notes and Illustrations.* Vol. 2 (Baltimore, 1837; reprint, Spartanburg, S.C.: The Reprint Company, 1968); William Hand Browne, *Maryland: The History of a Palatinate* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1884, 1904); J. Moss Ives, *The Ark and the Dove: The Beginning of Civil and Religious Liberties in America* (1936; reprint, New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1969); and for a romanticized fictional version, Lucy Meacham Thruston, *Mistress Brent: A Story of Lord Baltimore's Colony in 1638* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1901).

3. Bozman, *History of Maryland,* 315; Richardson, "Margaret Brent," 533. Margaret Brent was "undoubtedly the most professional and most effective woman attorney in America," and "one of the most active and successful lawyers of her time," Chroust, *Rise of the Legal Profession in America,* 49, 244; An "able and energetic woman," Andrews, *History of Maryland,* 5; She managed her affairs, one nineteenth-century historian allowed, "with masculine ability," Browne, *Maryland: The History of a Palatinate,* 64; Early twentieth-century woman suffrag-

benefited from being female in suppressing a threatened soldier's rebellion in 1648—supposedly by inspiring chivalry in them, an interpretation originally advanced in the nineteenth century that seems surprising to the modern reader—"her brief public career" was more central for American history than any proto-feminism her case may demonstrate.[4]

The most recent extended treatment of Margaret Brent's role in colonial American development takes the opposite position. Mary Beth Norton contends that Brent's experience illustrates that Chesapeake colonists subscribed to Sir Robert Filmer's ideas about the gendering of power.[5] In Norton's work, Brent appears as a powerful matriarchal figure, a "fictive widow" who, despite having never married was able to take a leadership role in Maryland precisely because she held the high social standing that the political theorist deemed acceptable. Those ideas, Norton claims, made it possible for male colonists to conceive of Brent having a significant public role. Norton echoes the nineteenth-century view that male colonists might have been more polite to Brent because of her gender and claims that the eventual refusal to grant her an actual role in the legislature revealed the limitations inherent in the Filmerian ideology. This interpretation, while novel, falters in that Brent fits awkwardly into the model.

Brent, a Catholic woman who never married, and who may have taken lay vows of celibacy, might better be understood to have drawn on Catholic imagery, seen by the many Catholic Maryland settlers more as an important abbess figure than as a Filmerian fictive widow. Norton focuses on how Brent gained power and finds her eventual demand for the vote less worthy of exploration. Yet the two cannot be disaggregated. Brent was a transitional figure, a woman who lived in a chaotic time and place and whose experience demonstrates the boundaries of the political and social order, and the permeability of those boundaries. A full explo-

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ists took her as a heroine, even starting Margaret Brent societies. See for example Frances M. Bjorkman and Annie G. Porritt, eds., "The Blue Book," *Woman Suffrage: History, Arguments and Results* (New York: National Woman Suffrage Publishing Co., Inc., 1917).

4. Carr, "Margaret Brent," 236–37. Carr comments, "the men who served her evidently felt that it was not only her strength but also her womanliness that inspired 'Civility and respect' and saved the day." This repeats an 1837 claim that chivalry must have played a part in the soldiers' decision to accept Brent's promises and not revolt. "There is a chivalrous disposition in citizens as well as soldiers, to obey the commands of women," Bozman, *Maryland*, 361. The argument that hungry, armed soldiers in the mid-1640s, facing a defenseless colony and uncertain where their pay for the last year's work would come from would hesitate to rebel because a woman asked them not to is a difficult explanation to support.

5. Sir Robert Filmer, an English political theorist, argued that state power is an extension of family power. Although his model is a patriarchal, hierarchical model, it allowed women of high social standing to wield considerable public power. Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), esp. 281–87.

ration of her rise to prominence, her exercise of economic power, and the political consequences of her efforts reveals not so much the gendering of power, as its construction and deployment in an early colonial setting.

Achieving High Status

When Margaret Brent arrived in Maryland in November 1638 she was a notable personage. She and her sister brought eight servants with them and had sent five men with the first ships four years earlier. The sisters carried a letter from Lord Baltimore granting them "as much Land in and about the town of St. Maries and elsewhere in that Province in as ample manner and with as large priviledges as any of the first Adventurers." Their brothers Fulke and Giles Brent, arriving at the same time, were immediately placed on the Governor's Council—two of the five men chosen for that year's duty.[6]

Margaret Brent's status upon arrival arose from several factors. A spinster in her late thirties, she was literate and probably educated. Her family was among the lesser gentry in England. Her father had served as sheriff of Gloucestershire, and her mother was the daughter of Giles Reed, Lord of Tusburie and Witten. The favor of Cecilius Calvert, Lord Baltimore, as evidenced by the letter she carried, might have indicated some prior relationship among the Calvert and Brent families. Fulke and Cecilius Calvert were both Oxford men and may well have met during those years. The relationship may have been even closer. Some genealogists assert a marriage between Leonard Calvert and one Anne Brent, possibly Margaret's sister, in 1642. The privileges Baltimore granted Margaret Brent were in response to a letter she wrote to him and may suggest that she was a highly desirable addition to the colony or that Calvert favored her for personal reasons, quite possibly as a result of a family friendship. Mistress Mary Throughton (sometimes Tranton), who arrived on the same ship as the Brents, with the same honorific title of Mistress and who likewise transported servants, did not receive the rights of first settlers granted to the Brent sisters. Thus, Lord Baltimore's favor probably supplemented the Brent sisters' social standing and wealth and created their high status, upon landfall, in the Maryland colony.[7]

6. "Land Notes," 1634–1655," *MdHM*, 5 (1910): 166–74, 261–71, 365–74. [Copied from the Land Office Records, Libers F, A, and B. "All the essential facts as to persons and places will be printed in full, but legal and other purely formal matter will be omitted."] From letter August 2, 1638, C. Baltimore to Leonard Calvert, p. 263, see also p. 167. Fulke returned to England the following year, but retained interests in Maryland.

7. Fulke Brent entered Oxford in 1613. John Lewger, another prominent Maryland colonist, was known to have become good friends with Cecilius Calvert when they were both at Oxford. Lewger entered in 1616. If Fulke and Cecilius Calvert did not meet personally in this manner, their brothers may have met at school. Giles Brent, Fulke's younger brother, is known to have been literate and very probably well educated. If he followed his brother's example, he would have attended Oxford in time to meet both the future Lord Baltimore and

In October 1639, Mary and Margaret Brent were granted land in St. Mary's and named the plot Sisters Freehold, a name suggestive of Catholic nunneries. Their neighbors were their brother Giles to the north and on the south Thomas Greene, both of whom were members of the Maryland Governor's Council.[8] Both Giles Brent and Greene later held the acting governorship of the colony.

The Brents suited Lord Baltimore's intentions well. His plan for the colony included a hierarchical social system with gentry present from the earliest days. He also sought to create a colony in which Catholics predominated. Brent family members had held high offices in England, such as Sir Nathaniel Brent who gained an appointment to the commission that investigated Ingle's Rebellion of 1645–1646. The family suffered in the 1630s and 1640s under the political restrictions placed at that time on Catholics in England. In the Maryland records their names are consistently set off from the majority of inhabitants by titles Mr. and Mistress, and later by Gent., or, in the case of Giles, his military title Captain. The use in government documents of titles and, for men, an invitation to participate in the Council were two of the clearest signs of gentry status.[9]

The Brents arrived in Maryland, then, with the obvious favor of Lord Baltimore. The Brent sisters were granted the rights of first colonists, even though they arrived four years after the initial settlers. These rights included choice lands bordered by some of the most prominent men in the young colony, and their brothers were immediately recognized as prominent Marylanders in their own right.

If Margaret Brent arrived in Maryland with high status in 1638, her actions in the years following demonstrate fairly steady accrual of higher status and greater personal power. She soon became a significant force in the political culture of Maryland. The first indication of this new role came in 1640, when the chief of the Piscataway Indians sought to settle his six-year-old daughter and heir with the white colonists. Margaret Brent and Governor Leonard Calvert adopted the girl

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Lewger. In any case one can argue that the families moved in similar social circles. See Edward C. Papenfuse, Alan F. Day, David W. Jordan, and Gregory A. Stiverson, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature, 1635–1789* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); also W. B. Chilton, compiler, "The Brent Family," *Virginia Historical Magazine,* 15 (1908): 324–29, 450–53; and 16 (1908): 96–100. For the Calvert/Brent marriage see John Bailey Calvert Nicklin, "The Calvert Family, part II," *MdHM,* 16 (1921): 189–90. Others doubt this claim; Land Notes," 167.

8. "Land Notes, 1634–1655," *Maryland Historical Magazine,* 5 (1910): 264.

9. John D. Krugler, "The Calvert Family, Catholicism and Court Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England," *The Historian,* 43 (1981): 378–92; David W. Jordan, *Foundations of Representative Government in Maryland, 1632–1715* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 18, 25; Chilton, "The Brent Family," particularly April 1908, 451; William A. Reavis, "The Maryland Gentry and Social Mobility, 1637–1676," *William and Mary Quarterly,* 14 (1957): 418–28.

jointly and christened the "princess" Mary Brent Kitamaquund. By fostering his daughter with Brent and Calvert, the chief formed an alliance with the colony's leaders such that the colonists' welfare became the tribe's welfare. In return, the colonists could not ignore problems that might befall their ward's family. The wardship was an honor and an important diplomatic trust, one that the governor chose to share with Margaret Brent.[10]

Brent appeared regularly in colony records beginning in 1642. On April 25 she and her sister Mary registered a request for 1000 acres due them for transporting five more servants the previous year. Late in June she appeared in her first case in the Provincial Court, one of several plaintiffs in a case against two confidence men. Over the next four years she was involved in twenty-four recorded suits, always as plaintiff. Most of these involved calling due debts owed, and in these cases the clerk recorded little, if any, additional information. Several debtors demanded that she provide evidence of the debt and of the ten cases for which a resolution is noted, Brent won eight. In one case she recovered slightly less than she had initially sued for. Once she withdrew the action. Only once did she lose, in a case over the ownership of a cow; she lost the cow and had to pay seventy pounds of tobacco in damages.[11] In addition to establishing Brent as a frequent and successful litigant, these cases provide further evidence of Brent's personal standing in the colony.

In four cases she was at some point represented by an attorney—a far less formal occurrence in seventeenth-century Maryland than today. The attorneys handled four of the total ten court appearances these cases entailed. Once she was represented by Francis Anthill, a man of the "middling sort." Twice Edward Packer represented her and although not considered a gentleman at that time, he later gained the honorific "Mr." and thus advanced into the gentry of the colony. In a fourth instance, Brent's neighbor and council member (and future governor) Thomas Greene represented her in court.[12]

Perhaps the most intricate case in which Margaret Brent was involved in this early period began on March 14, 1644. Technically, Brent sued Governor Leonard Calvert for seven thousand pounds of tobacco, his share of financial support for their ward Mary Kitamaquund. The court promptly issued a writ attaching this amount from Calvert's estate. Four days later, Thomas Cornwalleys was in court for "great contempt & defaming of his Lo[rdshi]ps goverm[en]t & justice in the p[ro]vince." Cornwalleys had filed suit against Calvert just prior to Brent's ac-

10. Rigby, 217–18; Carr, "Margaret Brent," 236. She was defrauded of her inheritance. Giles Brent eventually married her. Their son Giles Brent (c.1652–79) participated in Bacon's Rebellion. See Chilton, "The Brent Family," April 1908, 451–52, and July 1908, 98–99.

11. "Land Notes, 1634–1655," *MdHM*, 5 (1910): 173; Browne, ed., *Arch. Md.* 4:67–292 *passim.*

12. Reavis, 424–25; *Arch. Md.* 4:119.

tion, but because Brent received attachment first, Cornwalleys went empty-handed. Cornwalleys said in court "that he supposed the pe[ti]tion of m[ist]r[es]s margar. Brent was pretended to defraud him of his right to the tobaccos;" that "the tob attached was to be or would be sent home to the said Leon. Calver[t] or words to that purpose" (Calvert was in England, having left the previous April, not to return until September 1644). The court sentenced Cornwalleys to three weeks in prison, a sentence that Giles Brent, sitting on the Council as Lieutenant Governor, suspended.[13] Although Cornwalleys was found guilty of defamation, the logic of his claim stands. It is possible Margaret Brent was already acting on Calvert's behalf. She did not sue Calvert for support for Kitamaquund either before or after this episode. Also, the amount for which she sued seems exorbitant—five years later soldiers were suing for a year's wages at between three hundred and two thousand pounds of tobacco. That she not only appeared to be looking after Calvert's interests but was willing to cross a council member to do so is interesting. It appears that as early as 1644 Brent's peer group included council members.

She also represented her brother Fulke Brent during these early years which suggests that some of her standing was doubtless due to the trust extended her by her brothers. In one of the major cases she won, begun on April 1, 1643, she served as attorney for her brother Fulke and won for him three thousand tobacco.[14] In another instance her brother Giles Brent sought her aid. In 1642, Secretary John Lewger charged then acting-Governor Brent with something slightly less than treason: his failure to execute a commission to make war on the Susquehannocks. According to the charges, not only did Giles Brent not move against the Indians, he purportedly impeded the efforts of men willing and eager take up arms against the Indians. A week before he was due to appear in court Giles Brent signed over all his lands, goods, debts due him, cattle, chattels, and servants in Maryland to Margaret Brent. Certainly, he took this action primarily to keep his property free from fines or confiscation, yet it is telling that he chose to convey the land to Margaret rather than to Fulke or even to Mary. Although the court soon cleared Giles Brent, there is no record indicating that he regained possession of his lands. Years later Margaret Brent filed suits regarding her Kent Isle property, likely the land that had formerly belonged to Giles, as well as for her St. Mary's estate. Early in 1644, Giles conveyed to Margaret 2,940 pounds of tobacco and noted in the court record that the sum was in partial payment of a debt of £60 sterling he owed her. That he chose to convey his lands to her in 1642 should not be taken as a sign that the Brent siblings acted as a family unit with Margaret as a temporary figure-

13. *Arch. Md.* 4:265.
14. Ibid., 192, 228–30. Initiated April 1, 1643, settled February 1, 1644.

head. The 1644 record clearly indicates that her finances were separate from her brother's and that they kept records of debt owed to one another.[15]

What is particularly remarkable about Margaret Brent's high public profile and strong economic presence in this period was the general reluctance of many of the settlers to leave property in a woman's hands for any indefinite period. In 1638, just over half a year before Brent's landfall, the Maryland legislature discussed limiting the duration of women's landholding:

> That it may be prevented that noe woman here vow chastety in the world, unlesse she marry wthin seaven years after land fall to hir, she must ether dispose away of hir land, or else she shall forfeite it to the nexte of kinne, and if she have but one Mannor, wheras she canne not alienaite it, it is gonne unlesse she git a husband.[16]

Lord Baltimore never approved the proposed law, but its drafting reveals a predisposition to hostility among Brent's fellow colonists for exactly Margaret Brent's situation—a single woman, with prime property in her own name, who had every intention of remaining unmarried.[17] It is possible the legislators sought to prevent the establishment of quasi-nunneries, lands run by women to support themselves in lives of chastity. Whether this was incipient anti-Catholicism or more direct opposition to the creation of a sexually and maritally inaccessible female gentry in Maryland, the legislators' opposition was aimed precisely at women such as Margaret and Mary Brent.

Margaret Brent arrived in Maryland when such attitudes prevailed among prominent colonists, yet she still won high status commensurate with her background in England. Further, she augmented this status by increasing her land holdings, interacting on apparent equal standing with members of the governor's council, and pursuing steadily larger suits in the courts, both on her own behalf

15. It is ironic Giles Brent's son, himself half Indian, received a similar commission from Nathaniel Bacon years later and accompanied Bacon on his first expedition against the Indians. When Governor Berkeley declared Bacon a traitor, Giles Brent the son raised forces to oppose Bacon. See Chilton, "The Brent Family" (1908), 99, 128ff., 132–3, 262–3.

16. Thomas Copley to Lord Baltimore, April 3, 1638, account of the proceedings of the last assembly, *The Calvert Papers* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1889), 165.

17. One finds in fact that female property ownership was less frequent in the colonies than in England. Women owned about one in five estates probated in early modern England, while in colonial America they owned less than one in ten. An imbalanced colonial sex ratio certainly contributed to this difference, with widows more likely to remarry and hence less likely to die with property of their own. Yet the scope of the difference indicates that women's economic power was lessened in the colonies, not only the number of estates but the proportion of probated wealth owned by women was significantly higher in England, more than demographic data can explain. See Carole Shammas, "Early American Women and Control over Capital," in *Women in the Age of the American Revolution*, ed. Ronald Hoffman and Peter J.

and representing others. In 1642 her average court case was for 268 pounds of tobacco. The next year's average was 1166 pounds, more than four times the previous year's, and in 1644 her case average was around 1912 pounds, another 64 percent increase.[18] Although she did not have the formal political authority of a councillor or even a burgess, she certainly ranked as a peer, by the measure of both her economic status and legal skills, of the men who filled those offices.

Responding to Political Instability

Historians of colonial Maryland have written extensively of the opportunities for economic and social mobility available in the first decades of settlement. Few seem to note, however, that a period of intense instability at mid-century was the point at which lasting political and social innovations were created that established Maryland as an area of greater opportunity for advancement than England could provide. When Richard Ingle sailed into Maryland in 1643, captaining his ship the *Reformation,* and uttering treasonous words, "The king is no king, nor will I acknowledge him for my king longer then [sic] he joines with the ho^{rle} [whore?] his house of Parlament," the Maryland Attorney General took him into custody and put a guard on his ship. Ingle escaped, damaging people and property in the process, and demonstrating for the Maryland colonists both the political fragility of their position in relation to the turmoil stirring in Britain, and the physical fragility of the colony.[19]

Ingle returned in 1645, still violent and offensive, and for over a year instigated a period of turmoil, known as the "plundering time" or Ingle's Rebellion. Records for this period are sparse, but Ingle attacked the very foundation of Maryland's existence, arguing that it should be part of Virginia. Intolerant of Catholics, he followed up his argument with looting, property destruction, and violence. The rebellion lasted about a year and a half, from early 1645 through mid-1647, and saw the loss of a substantial proportion of the colonial population,

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Albert. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), 134–54. Shammas' findings are modified for the early Chesapeake, however, by the tendency of men in the seventeenth century to leave their entire estates to their wives. See Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "The Planter's Wife: The Experience of White Women in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," *William and Mary Quarterly,* 34 (1977): 542–71.

18. The averages are approximate as it is difficult to estimate the value of beaver pelts and cows in pounds of tobacco. The trend toward larger suit amounts is also revealed. (From later records it appears a cow was worth £300–500 tobacco.)

19. Lois Green Carr, "Sources of Political Stability and Upheaval in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," *MdHM,* 79 (1984): 44–70. Lois Green Carr and Russell R. Menard, "Immigration and Opportunity: The Freedman in Early Colonial Maryland," in Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds., *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), 206–42; Russell R. Menard, "From Servant to Freeholder: Status Mobility and Property Accumulation in Seventeenth-Century

widespread destruction and confiscation of property, and literal suspension of the colonial government. Governor Calvert and many colonists fled to Virginia for a period, while a usurper briefly ruled the colony. Lord Baltimore's authority was restored only when Leonard Calvert led in an army he had raised in Virginia.[20]

Authority had to be restored in the colony, but many of the features central to the English model of a stable state were simply unavailable or largely absent from early Maryland. For the most part, Maryland lacked family-centered politics, did not have sufficient longevity of assembly service to allow for adequate legislative continuity, and did not have clearly understood wealth guidelines for political participation. Most importantly, Maryland could not provide guarantees against both upward and downward mobility. The attempt to do without the recognized, strong gentry, until some later date—a key component for social stability in the early modern Atlantic world—had failed and could not be repeated. Colonists immediately drew educated, wealthy, well-connected men such as Giles Brent and John Lewger into leadership ranks upon their arrival in the colony, but these ranks were hardly closed to others. One historian calculates that through 1676 fully 82 percent of the men gaining leadership positions immediately upon landfall in Maryland had experienced "shipboard mobility." They were counted gentry in Maryland when they would not have qualified as such in England.[21]

Maryland," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 30 (1973): 37–64; Russell R. Menard, P. M. G. Harris, and Lois Green Carr, "Opportunity and Inequality: The Distribution of Wealth on the Lower Western Shore of Maryland, 1638–1705," *MdHM*, 69 (1974): 169–84; *Arch. Md.*, 4:245.

20. For accounts of Ingle's Rebellion see Bozman, *History of Maryland*; Andrews, *History of Maryland;* Russell R. Menard, "Maryland's 'Time of Troubles': Sources of Political Disorder in Early St. Mary's," *MdHM*, 76: (1981): 124–40. Historians differ on when and why stability was successfully established. Lois Carr, "Sources of Stability," argues that a steady, if gradual, creation of an orderly society developed throughout the seventeenth century, with the rebellion as a brief faltering point in this dynamic. Lorena Walsh, "The Development of Local Power Structures: Maryland's Lower Western Shore in the Early Colonial Period," in Bruce C. Daniels, ed., *Power and Status: Officeholding in Colonial America* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1986), 53–74, finds stability on the county level rather than colony-wide, and links it to the creation of hierarchies of native-born elites in local communities, gradations of wealth translating into recognizable gradations of authority, and longevity of family lines contributing to status. David Jordan, "Political Stability and the Emergence of a Native Elite in Maryland," in Tate and Ammerman, *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century*, 243–73, asserts that only at the end of the seventeenth century, with the emergence of a native-born elite, did Maryland gain political stability. In "Time of Troubles," Menard draws attention to a different but complementary question, linking instability with opportunity and the lack of deference engendered by the opportunity.

21. The mid-seventeenth century was a time of great political upheaval in England, as well. For further comparisons, see Horn, *Adapting to the New World*, and Holmes and Heale, *The*

Precisely within this period of social and political malleability Margaret Brent gained powers both unprecedented and unrepeated by any other colonial North American woman. The need in Maryland to forge a new basis for stability may have inspired her request for authority to match her power. The colonists had to break with English norms for distributing political authority, because there were not enough elite men to take on leadership positions. Hence, the search for stability led early to expanded opportunity for power and authority. Acceptance into the legislature would have situated Brent's ascension to economic and community leadership as contributing to the new political structure, to be seen as a welcome, stabilizing feature in the new Maryland social and political order. The alternative was to view her prominence as a temporary, faintly humiliating emergency measure, a symbol of disorder and instability.

The immediate cause of Brent's precipitous increase in political stature occurred when Governor Calvert named her as his executor. When he died, on June 9, 1647, order had barely been restored following Ingle's Rebellion. The colony was in severe financial straits, and the soldiers who had effected the restoration of Lord Baltimore's authority had neither departed nor been paid. In a verbal will, Calvert appointed Thomas Greene acting governor and Margaret Brent his executor, telling her tersely, "I make you my sole Exequutrix, Take all, & pay all." [22]

By dividing his affairs in this way, Leonard Calvert inadvertently made explicit the contradiction in Margaret Brent's status. He separated his political authority from his financial obligations and set Brent in a position from which she needed to acquire, at minimum, substantial formal legal authority and informal political power in order to meet his financial obligations. Calvert had not separated his financial and political identities during his life. In hiring soldiers in Virginia he had promised payment out of his own estate and out of Lord Baltimore's if his own became exhausted, yet defense of the colony was certainly a political undertaking with possible financial consequences for all inhabitants. Because the

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Gentry; Menard, "Time of Troubles," argues that there were "natural leaders," men with wealth, education, and social status, who were always referred to, in the records, by the titles Mr., Gent., or by a military rank, but notes that these men did not constitute a clear leadership class. The qualifications for rank could be acquired through work and luck rather than family connections. Colonists chose their leaders rather than accepting an established set of families into the offices of government. William A. Reavis, "The Maryland Gentry and Social Mobility, 1637–1676," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 14 (1957): 418–28. It is unclear whether his calculations include the female gentry. Although women certainly arrived in Maryland with the honorific Mistress, one suspects that when Reavis discusses "men" he neglects his question's applicability to women.

22. *Arch. Md.*, 4 313, 314, 316. Browne suggests that if Calvert "had reversed his testamentary dispositions and made Greene his executor and Mistress Brent governor, it would have been, on the whole, a better arrangement." Greene is considered to have been a weak governor, Browne, *Maryland*, 64.

commitment was financial, paying the soldiers became Margaret Brent's problem, not Governor Greene's or the other legislators'. The colony's welfare depended in part on resolving this problem, yet Calvert assigned it to a person who was politically disadvantaged.

Depending on one's view, this assignment was either a very shortsighted or a cleverly longsighted one. Possibly, but highly unlikely, Calvert did not recognize the extent to which political power was required to address his debts. Alternatively, he may have trusted Brent more than Greene or others to persevere in creatively rounding up funds. Her record in the courts up to that time was certainly impressive. She had pursued cases as plaintiff, and never appeared as a defendant, suggesting that she was more often in a position to extend credit than to require it. Her action in 1644 on Calvert's behalf to forestall Cornwalleys's suit, if a ruse as Cornwalleys asserted, certainly indicated innovative and effective manipulation of the legal system during a difficult moment. Calvert may have been more insightful in that he trusted that Brent's financial abilities would see the soldiers paid and that her disenfranchisement would relieve the colony of the strain of a levy for this obligation.

Brent's new responsibilities had immediate impact on her position in the economic network for the colony. Brent appeared in court as a defendant in fifteen lawsuits during the last months of 1647, all of them filed against Leonard Calvert's estate or Lord Baltimore's. She filed as plaintiff in three more suits, one for damages to her own property in the rebellion, and one each for Calvert and Baltimore. This number represented a substantial caseload and Brent managed it well. When Nathaniel Pope sued Leonard Calvert's estate for twenty-three hundred pounds of tobacco on September 9, 1647, Brent answered on the same day, denying the two thousand, and acknowledging only 197 pounds remaining due on a 250 pound bill. The court awarded Pope only the 197 pounds. Brent acquitted herself ably in this sort of case, but her situation was complicated by Calvert's promises to the soldiers he had brought from Virginia. On October 6, 1647, Captain John Price filed a suit against the estate of Calvert on behalf of himself and the soldiers of St. Inigoes Fort for the unheard of sum of 45,600 pounds of tobacco and 100 barrels of corn (Brent estimated the total damages to her entire demolished Kent Isle manor at 30,600 pounds of tobacco). The attachment issued on Calvert's estate as a result made it impossible for her to satisfy other suits proven against the estate.[23]

Margaret Brent reclaimed the initiative in December. On December 13 she filed a suit on behalf of Lord Baltimore against Thomas Gerrard for allegedly not

23. Ingle's Rebellion left a gap in the colonial records. Regular records resume late in August 1647, *Arch. Md.* 4:325, 333; Price's suit, *Arch. Md.* 4:338, 357; suits not satisfied because of attachment, 342, 350–53, 358.

paying custom on tobacco he had recently exported. Thus her first appearance as Lord Baltimore's attorney was as plaintiff assuring collection of monies due the proprietor. One week later she was in court acknowledging a debt due to a plaintiff from Leonard Calvert's estate. When she explained why she could not provide the cow due the plaintiff she did not explicitly cite the fact that the ex-governor's estate was under attachment but instead noted that, "shee not having his L[ordshi]ps stock att desposall," she was "disinabled to make it good." Brent first acted as Lord Baltimore's attorney and then asserted a distinction between Leonard Calvert's estate and Lord Baltimore's, a distinction that Calvert had guarded less carefully. Debts were due from one or the other, and Brent insisted that claims must be directed against the correct estate. Captain Price had attached the stock in his suit against Calvert, yet Calvert had apparently promised those wages out of the proprietor's stock. Brent found the legalities involved obscure and sought to clarify them in a way that would allow her to resolve an impasse and fulfill her responsibilities.[24]

January 3, 1648, was a highlight of Brent's political career. First, Captain John Price appeared in the Provincial Court and gave deposition that Leonard Calvert had promised to pay soldiers out of his own estate and, when that was exhausted, out of the Lord Proprietor's. Brent then asked the court whether as Calvert's administrator she was to receive the power of attorney he had held for Lord Baltimore in the colony. Governor Greene, indecisive, asked Councilor Giles Brent's opinion. The councilor, her brother, found that she should be given limited power of attorney for the proprietor. Greene acquiesced. Brent paid settlement on an old lawsuit and then denied the suit of Captain Price for 45,600 pounds of tobacco plus a hundred barrels of corn from Calvert's estate. From this point on, soldiers sued the proprietor directly, through his attorney Margaret Brent, and Calvert (also through Brent) only for matters pertaining to the governor's own estate.[25] For the soldiers this was a substantial setback. Perhaps they thought it would be more difficult to recoup monies from the proprietor and in fact several later episodes suggest that this was the case.[26] Brent had neatly returned the ques-

24. Brent/L^{ps} Attorney *v.* Gerrard, *Arch. Md.*, 4:350, 355–6, 358. Thomas Greene sold one of the proprietor's cattle on December 2, 1647, and this may have sparked Brent's determination. Greene's right of attorney to convey the cattle is questionable and thus Brent may have been moved to clarify the legality of conveying Baltimore's property. She may also have been annoyed that Greene should have access to what was technically part of Calvert's attached estate, see *Arch. Md.*, 4:480; note one earlier case on September 30, 1647, in which the estate of Leonard Calvert was sued for a cow from the proprietor's stock. In that case a written promise from Calvert was produced.

25. January first is treated here as the first of every year. *Arch. Md.*, 4:358. The record manages to convey this transaction without mentioning Margaret Brent by name or by any gendered pronoun.

26. Several soldiers attempted to sue Brent directly, hoping to establish that she had person-

tion of paying the soldiers to the freemen of Maryland and thus saved Calvert's estate from ruin by gaining access to, and control over, the proprietor's.

Three weeks later Brent appeared at the newly called general assembly and asked for voice and vote, that is, the right both to participate in legislative debates and to cast her vote in the assembly. By that time she held her own substantial estate in addition to the responsibility for Calvert's estate and for the Lord Proprietor's. Three weeks earlier Governor Greene had asked Giles Brent's opinion on expanding Margaret Brent's economic and legal role, yet now Greene responded promptly and denied her request for political authority. He did not put this question to the house and did not seek Giles Brent's advice. Calvert had bequeathed her substantial economic power but he had invested authority in Greene.

Brent's case for participation was strong. As Lord Baltimore's attorney she was looking after his estate and this role had previously belonged to the colony's highest local governmental authority. If a major function of government was to represent substantial landed interests, the lack of direct representation for three of the largest estates in the colony severely compromised the legitimacy of the present government. Brent "protested agst all proceedings in this p[rese]nt Assembly, unlesse shee may be p[rese]nt and have vote." Brent had accumulated both property and power, yet without authority she acted in others' names, and her power seemed contingent and illegitimate.[27]

She had accepted responsibility for Leonard Calvert's financial affairs and lent her skills to ensuring the fulfillment of essential contracts and regaining a semblance of order. When stymied by the issue of the soldiers' pay, she maneuvered to break the impasse by resolving the late governor's estate into its two constituent parts. Brent's position was unique, but the linkage between economic power, social standing, and political authority that she sought to invoke was unambiguous. Calvert's choice of executor was unusual, but it indicated and enhanced Brent's stature in the colony.

Of the forty-four other estates for whom executors were named in the records through 1650, a full two-thirds were administered by men who at some point served in the legislature. Another 14 percent had widows as executors. In the remaining nine cases, close friends or business partners were most often named executor, followed by the primary beneficiaries. In the majority of these cases executors had substantial political recourse, whether through representation in government or through the highly structured system governing widows' property rights.[28] Administering an estate did not usually entail legislative notice or

27. *Arch. Md.*, 1:215.

28. If one looks only at elected legislators, the number is 52 percent. See Edward C. Papenfuse, Alan F. Day, David W. Jordan, and Gregory A. Stiverson, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature, 1635–1789* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979). If one also counts proxy holders, the number rises.

action. Most of the actions involved settling debts and bringing suits in court, responsibilities for which Brent was well qualified. That councilors and legislators administered the majority of estates may indicate only that higher status men were usually chosen for this responsibility rather than implying that legislative access was particularly important. Brent's selection may indicate primarily that Calvert viewed her as their peer and every bit as well qualified to pursue fiscal settlement.

Nonetheless the economic interest generated as administrator of substantial property could arguably be translated into political representation. When Councilor Thomas Cornwalleys was out of the province for the assembly of October 1640, his attorney Cuthbert Fenwick was invited to have a voice and seat "out of our care that so great a member of our province may have his Attorney there to take care of such things as may concern him." In Virginia the linkage between property and representation grew so strong that property itself seemed to deserve representation and a parallel deep concern for giving landed interest political voice was apparently present from the first decade of settlement in Maryland as well.[29] Margaret Brent's situation eight years later was parallel. Her economic and social position in the colony would have called for a substantial role in the

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ally assumed a portion of the proprietor's debt, *Arch. Md.*, 4:409, 516, 521, 528–9. See *Arch. Md.*, 4:167–68, etc. I counted five legislators Papenfuse et. al. excluded on this basis, who nonetheless held sufficient proxies that they can be considered "representatives," e.g. Thomas Hebden and Cyprian Thoroughgood. See administrations on forty-five estates as noted in *Arch. Md.* 4. The final nine cases include W. Blissard, who named Henry Crawley, planter and "mate and copartner . . . in all his personall estate" his heir and executor, 24–5; R. Marshall whose closest living relatives chose the executor; two cases in which the primary heir/beneficiary served, and one in which a Virginia man handled the estate, 317, 326, 341, 362, 365; in the remaining cases information is too slim to distinguish the relationship of executor to deceased, 23, 24, 69, 70.

29. *Arch. Md.*, 1:88–89; J. R. Pole, *Political Representation in England and the Origins of the American Republic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1966), 136. At each assembly several men were summoned by special writ from the governor. Usually wealthy colonists, frequently military men, and often serving on the governor's council, those summoned by special writ were always obligated to attend. The Brent brothers were usually summoned this way, although Giles was sometimes elected burgess for the Isle of Kent by the freemen on that island. Cornwalleys was frequently summoned by special writ, and occasionally Greene. Most men who had vote in the assembly gained it in one of two other ways. When the governor called for elected representatives, each legislative district (termed a hundred) sent in one or two elected burgesses, each of whom had voice and vote in the unicameral house. If the governor called an assembly of all freemen, however, every freeman in Maryland was obligated to attend either in person or by proxy. There is one record of a man protesting his freeman status. Thomas Weston "pleaded he was no freeman because he had no land nor certain dwelling here" when a general assembly was called for September 1642. The house voted that he was still a freeman and obligated to attend. Weston was a fairly prominent merchant in the colony, but may have

governance of the colony if she was allowed any political role at all. A freeman was defined then as any man not a servant, whether he had property in the colony or not. This held true even six years later, when another man petitioned the house for a vote in the General Assembly, and first had to prove himself no longer a servant.[30]

When the assembly met with elected burgesses the desire to participate was apparently stronger. In March 1639, Cuthbert Fenwick claimed voice but not vote because he did not care for the burgesses elected for his district. He was allowed voice, as was another man who echoed his claim. The legislature apparently reconsidered this decision to allow dissenters from the majority's chosen representatives to be heard on equal footing with the duly elected burgesses. They closed the loophole soon after. Two years later the house refused the request for voice in his own person of a burgess who found himself replaced mid-session by a new vote in his hundred.[31]

In these two cases involving elected assemblies the process by which decisions were made on unusual claims for legislative participation is not recorded. From the pattern in the legislative record it can be inferred, however, that these decisions were collective and offended the legislators. Yet if handling of disputes in elected assemblies is ambiguous, the records clearly show that voting in the house, attended by all freemen, resolved disputes. The house thus decided Weston's attempt to be absolved of freeman status in 1642 and voted the same way on Nicholas Gwyther's claim of freemanship and the vote in 1648.

Margaret Brent's claim to voice and vote mediates between the precedents set in the previous decade. She was clearly neither a servant nor landless and she requested voice and vote not as an ex officio burgess but in a general assembly of freemen. In this sense her claim actually appears rather modest. In 1640, Thomas Cornwalleys' attorney was invited to participate in a similar manner in order that "so great a member of our province may have his Attorney there to take care of

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claimed Virginia as his home. When he died in 1647 his estate was administered by a man in Virginia. We can speculate why he wished to avoid the status of freeman. On the day of his protest, Weston was drafted into a committee to draw up a bill on making war with some Indians and to consider other matters regarding the colony's safety. Additional members of this committee included the governor, Giles Brent, Greene, Cornwalleys, the secretary, and the surveyor general. The élite membership suggests Weston's own high status. If he sought to avoid legislative duty, it was doubtless not because he thought himself unworthy. His options seemed to be nonparticipation or full participation at the highest levels of responsibility. If war threatened in 1642, Weston may have preferred the status of a foreigner rather than play a key role in defending the colony and face a possible levy to support the military effort. *Arch. Md.*, 1:170–71, 4:341, 1:177; 218, 220. At the same session in which Weston asserted his non-freeman status, another man was excused from appearing, "being certified for a servant."

30. *Arch. Md.* 1:32, 105, 170–71, 177, 218, 220; *Arch. Md.*, 4:341.

31. *Arch. Md.*, 1:32, 105.

such things as may concern him." Surely Margaret Brent—who in 1648 held substantial lands in St. Mary's and on Kent Isle in her own name, held the ex-governor's estate as administrator, and had power of attorney for Lord Baltimore's Maryland estate—was both a great member of the province with substantial interests of her own and represented, as attorney, perhaps the single most important "member of our province," the Lord Proprietor. Brent emphasized this last point when less than three weeks before she demanded the vote she had sought and received official power of attorney for Lord Baltimore's Maryland interests. She requested the vote "for her selfe," but also because the Provincial Court had ordered that she was "to be lookd uppon and received as his L[ordshi]ps Attorney."[32] Brent's arguments for the vote appear to have been threefold. She needed it to enable her to look after her own interests, in her capacity as Lord Baltimore's attorney, and, to deny her request would also deny representation to the Lord Proprietor's attorney—and implicitly, perhaps, to Lord Baltimore himself.

Circumstances in the colony supported her request. The breakdown of order caused by Ingle's Rebellion persisted, creating great political, economic, and social malleability throughout Maryland. The flight of Protestants from the colony also left the population low and the local gentry depleted. Others in the colony certainly benefited from the breakdown and took advantage of the increased social and political mobility. William Reavis has noted that the elevation of common Marylanders into "the indigenous gentry," those not referred to with an honorific title such as Mr. or Gent. upon landfall, but who began to receive it later, first started in 1647. He claims that the rate of ascension in this manner was fairly steady through the rest of the century, but what is striking is how the ratio of native to immigrant new gentry changed. From 1647 to 1650, 48 percent (fourteen out of twenty-nine) of the new gentry were indigenous. From 1651–55, the rate was 9 percent; for the entire 1651–76 period, the rate was 16 percent. The tumultuous years following Ingle's Rebellion saw the introduction of the practice of bringing local people into the gentry and witnessed the greatest elevation rate of indigenous gentry before 1676. If politics became somewhat anti-democratic during Ingle's Rebellion, power nonetheless concentrated in the hands of a new local elite rather than an old imported gentry.[33]

The heightened disorder, albeit temporary, served as a good opportunity for reformulating government. The changes instituted in this period were not short term and the rate of ascension into the indigenous gentry was steady from 1647 to 1676. The new formula for the political elite institutionalized access to political authority for a broader upper class that now included a more middling people.

32. *Arch. Md.*, 1:215. Also *Arch. Md.*, 4:358.

33. Carr, "Sources of Stability," 55; Jordan, "Maryland's Privy Council;" and Susan Rosenfeld Falb, "Proxy Voting in Early Maryland Assemblies," *MdHM*, 73 (1978): 217–25.

Economic requirements for legislative participation remained, however, as social ones loosened, sometimes with ironic results. For example, in 1658, Zachary Wade, a former servant of Margaret Brent's, was elected to the Maryland Assembly.[34]

Margaret Brent's experience thus speaks of solid preparation for a role in the political leadership in the colony. She arrived in the colony with a background of high status and enhanced that status through social, economic, and legal interactions. Additionally, she accepted a public role that enhanced her own power. Past events and parallels in Maryland's legislative history lent legitimacy to Brent's political position and a temporary breakdown of order ushered in a period of substantial opportunity for enhanced authority. Nonetheless, her public role, economic standing, personal power, and high status, combined with new opportunities for political advancement, did not bring her political authority. Being a woman had not prevented her from fulfilling an extensive public role, yet it ultimately prohibited her participation in the legislature.

Yet gender conventions as well as political conventions were in flux in this period. The 1638 hostility to female land ownership indicates a strong preference for enforced patriarchy, yet these attitudes did not hinder Brent's ascension to prominence until quite late. Brent's success may have been due in part to her personal demeanor, yet there was also some support in her culture for broader conceptions of women's roles.

In particular, there was support for the model of the exceptional, heroic woman. A woman who became "masculine" in defense of established order was a common figure in early modern European cultural play. In England, women found sanction to step out of their usual roles when called upon by God. Specifically, there seemed a rash of female prophets. In the colonies, Anne Hutchinson, Mary Dyer, and others seemed to take advantage of this new public role available to women.[35]

The debate on woman's political nature that resulted from the reigns of Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots provided further support for such women. The most compelling defense of women holding political authority and power paralleled the prophets' justification that exceptions to the normal, expected order

34. Indigenous ascension into the gentry began in a period when immigration of reasonably high-status individuals faltered. It continued, however, even once migration levels recovered.

35. Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women on Top: Symbolic Sexual Inversion and Political Disorder in Early Modern Europe," *The Reversible World: Symbolic Inversion in Art and Society*; Barbara A. Babcock, ed., *Forms of Symbolic Inversion Symposium Toronto, 1972* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), 147–90; Phyllis Mack, "Women as Prophets During the English Civil War," *Feminist Studies*, 8 (1982): 19–45; Carol V. R. George, "Anne Hutchinson and the 'Revolution Which Never Happened'," *Remember the Ladies: New Perspectives on Women in American History: Essays in Honor of Nelson Manfred Blake,* ed. by Carol V. R. George (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1975), 13–37.

were usually divine in origin and had to be accepted as such. Alternatively, women rulers could be seen as a "second" law of nature—a natural, but rare, occurrence. A 1579 monograph asserted that fitness for office must be the final criterion for ascension to office and that fitness would sometimes mandate female rule. The author went on to imply a distinction between political power for women and authoritative expression for this power. The example of the English monarchs also made it clear that the marriage contract destroyed women's authority. Elizabeth I's rule was successful because she did not marry, although that decision unfortunately ended the blood-line. The debate over women as bad or good, disorderly or not, continued into the early seventeenth century in treatises that argued over the nature of woman. Although the authors agreed that political roles were the exception for women, they opened the possibility for serious consideration. The debate had another side, of course, one that gained currency faster and served to limit women's access to the public realm. The partisans on this side saw women as naturally disorderly. The powerful woman was, for them, a symbol of the breakdown of order. Their theories of the state emphasized an ideological relationship between the family and the state and insisted that order in both institutions required male leadership.[36]

If female leadership and independence were growing, as evidenced by the female prophets and monarchs, so was repression of independent women. The fate of New England's Anne Hutchinson was not uncommon for women prophets. The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were also the age of witch hunts in England, and the majority of the accused lived as widows and spinsters, women commonly outside of male control. Witch hunt activity increased during this period, more firmly targeted at women. In the Middle Ages about 60 percent of accused witches were female. In the fifteenth-century this figure grew to between sixty and seventy percent and in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to about 80 percent. Although there may have been some enhanced expectations for women, there was also clearly a surge of repression. Women who stood outside of subordinate relationships with men were vulnerable to harassment and persecution. Seen as threatening to the community, they were prime targets for discrimination. The discussion of women came to be linked with the topic of marriage, a linguistic habit echoed by many modern historians.[37]

36. Constance Jordan, "Woman's Rule in Sixteenth-Century British Political Thought," *Renaissance Quarterly*, 40 (1987): 421–51; see discussion of John Aylmer, *Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subjectes* (1559), especially 441–45, 449–50; David Chambers implies this in his *Discours de la legitime succession des femmes.* (Paris, 1597); Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 182. See also Constance Jordan's discussion of Thomas Rogers' *The Catholic Amussen*, 33, 182, and Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers.*

37. Mack; George; *Amussen*, 182. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York:

Cultural and ideological traditions had created more space for the development of a Margaret Brent, but more space as well for the fear and hostility that such women represented. Even the heroine Amazon, the woman of "masculine ability" who worked in support of the established order, was nonetheless symbolic of disorder. Although many welcomed her efforts, she also served as a reproach, not only for the men whose failures required her emergence but for the women whose weaknesses prevented them from sharing in her work.[38]

Margaret Brent had yet another cultural stereotype to work against in the form of the European satires on Indian sexual customs. European commentators considered the perceived rule of women in Native American communities as a mark of the degeneracy of those peoples.[39] Brent seemed to take a dominant role in looking out for the finances of her family that might have inspired uncomfortable comparisons with the supposed matrifocal culture of some Native American groups. Brent's role in her community and in her family, combined with her guardianship of the Indian princess Mary Kitamaquund, may have evoked a reminder.

Resistance to acknowledging her gender was an endemic reaction of colonists throughout Brent's interactions with the Maryland government. The most explicit was the mistake in which a clerk mistakenly wrote in a masculine pronoun for her. A more systematic example is the substitution of executor for executrix when Brent acted in this capacity, as appears early after Leonard Calvert's death to describe her new role. Widows who served as executor were called "executrix" in the records. This linguistic denial of Brent's gender extended to the avoidance of gendered language in the decision to give Margaret Brent power of attorney for Lord Baltimore. Brent is not mentioned by name or by any gendered pronoun in this record. Men in Maryland's government defeminized the records of Brent's business. Some of the cases in which she was involved fail to name her explicitly and are filed against "his Lordship's Attorney," or Leonard Calvert's attorney, as if this unidentified official impersonally handled the matter. In other cases the attorneys are named. If authority means having power in one's own name, Brent's quest for authority

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Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971); Joseph Klaits, *Servants of Satan: The Age of Witch Hunts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 52, 59. Klaits, 70, "Thinkers seemed unable to imagine a social role for unattached females." More recently, in "The Planter's Wife," Carr and Walsh wrote that the normal state of colonial Chesapeake women was marriage. For them and others, discussions of sex ratios are about birth rates and sexual behavior, views which are male- and family-centered, rather than about women's and men's different cultural and economic roles and contributions. See Carr and Menard, "Immigration and Opportunity: The Freedman in Early Colonial Maryland," in Tate and Ammerman, *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society*, and Menard, "Immigrants and Their Increase."

38. Davis, "Women on Top," 156–57.

39. Ibid., 172.

worked against deeply rooted prejudices. Still more difficult to defuse was a spiral of opposition. The greater Brent's prominence, the more wary some colonists became of her. Defeminized recording increased as Brent gained powers. Until she sought power of attorney for Lord Baltimore neither her brother nor Governor Greene would explicitly acknowledge her gender in deciding the question.[40]

Brent sought voice and vote to gain the authority that, for all the power she wielded, eluded her. The opportunity was both apparent and ephemeral. Aside from her sex, she fit the model of a "natural leader" in the colony—she was literate, wealthy, a successful planter, and of good family and character. She also fit the model for exceptional inclusion in government. Much like Thomas Weston in 1642, she had a central place in the network of economic and social interdependencies among elites in the colony. Additionally, she had the estate(s) that Weston lacked. Like Cuthbert Fenwicke in 1640, she held power of attorney for substantial estates that, had she been a man, would not have gone unrepresented in the legislature.

The instability of the colonial government provided opportunity as well. The political order was undergoing transformation, and people who would not have held political power in England had access to it in Maryland. The government may have become more concentrated in the hands of the elite, but access to the elite was expanding. Along with this systemic transition came the more immediate issues of making good on the late governor's and Lord Baltimore's debts. Such an outcome was essential to regaining stability in the colony and Margaret Brent was an essential figure in paying the debts.

Even the climate for female political participation may have been optimal. The European debate on woman's nature had posited seriously the existence of an appropriate female political role, particularly for the unmarried woman. Some women had been assuming expanded public roles in England and in the colonies. Brent herself fit the most benign image of female public power in that she exerted her influence in support of established systems.

40. The record of Brent gaining attorney for Baltimore reads that the question was moved whether "the s[ai]d Mr. Calvert's admi[ni]strator was to be received for his L[ordshi]ps Attorney," for the time being. Councilor Giles Brent advised, when the governor asked his opinion, "that he did conceive th[a]t the admi[ni]strator ought to be lookd uppon as Attorney" until Lord Baltimore named another. Governor Greene agreed. "And it was ordered th[a]t the Admi[ni]strator of Mr. Leon: Calvert aforesd should be received as his L[ordshi]ps Attorney to the intents abovesd." *Arch. Md.*, 1: 358; also 312, 314, 336, 342, passim, *Arch. Md.* 4:354–55, 336, 334, 379, 394, *passim.* This is similar to the dynamic described by Mary Ryan for women's public roles in the nineteenth-century U.S. She writes that the ground women gained was received devalued: as they gained access to new spaces and roles, the importance of those spaces and roles was diminished, and the power and legitimacy usually conferred in such spaces were removed to more exalted, still-masculine territory. See *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825–1880* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).

One can speculate how close Brent may have been to gaining the vote she sought. The record relates only that Governor Greene himself denied the request. He did not put the question to a vote, the usual process for deciding contested freeman status in a legislature. More telling is the assembly's response to Lord Baltimore's later criticism of Brent. On the same Friday on which she was denied vote or voice in the house, Margaret Brent began conveying the proprietor's cattle to the soldiers.[41] The fallout for Brent was severe. When Lord Baltimore learned of her disposition of his cattle he sent a blistering letter to the assembly in which he complained of her actions.

The assembly responded to Baltimore with a unanimous letter supporting Brent's actions. His Lordship's lands were "better for the Collonys safety at that time in her hands then in any mans else in the whole Province after your Brothers death," they claimed. "She rather deserved favour and thanks . . . to all those bitter invectives you have been pleased to Express against her." They went on to justify Greene's naming Brent Lord Baltimore's attorney " . . . your honour might have had far more just Cause of indignation against your then Governor for so small a Triffle to have endangered the Province then now in honour justice or Conscience you may when thereby alone your Lordships Province was then and is still Preserved."[42] The assembly sounded more grateful than embarrassed by Brent's prominence in the colony's affairs. Nonetheless, the request for the vote was the zenith of her political influence. She used her power to settle the colony's crisis, but her position gradually eroded.

Brent continued to spend more time in court defending herself against lawsuits, some of them frivolous, than pressing for payments due her. She had considerable success in reducing the amount of the award from the amount initially asked by plaintiffs, which may indicate increased efforts to defraud her. In 1649 she complained in several cases that she was not lawfully summoned with sufficient advance notice to prepare her defense. Brent continued actively defending the estates with which she was entrusted, but the work involved had changed. She spent more time defending against exaggerated claims, appearing for continuance after continuance when the plaintiffs were not punctual in returning for court dates, and seeking additional time herself to go through the records of the various estates she handled. Some of the additional work doubtless resulted from the size of her holdings and responsibilities, yet much of it appears malicious. Brent's status fell as a result of Baltimore's wrath and Greene's refusal to grant her a place in the legislature and is revealed, in part, through the additional problems she encountered in the courts.

41. *Arch. Md.* 1:217ff. Brent's notes of sales, *Arch. Md.* 4:367, 373, 374, 378. The following Monday the assembly passed an order to pay the soldiers' wages.
42. *Arch. Md.* 1:238 ff.

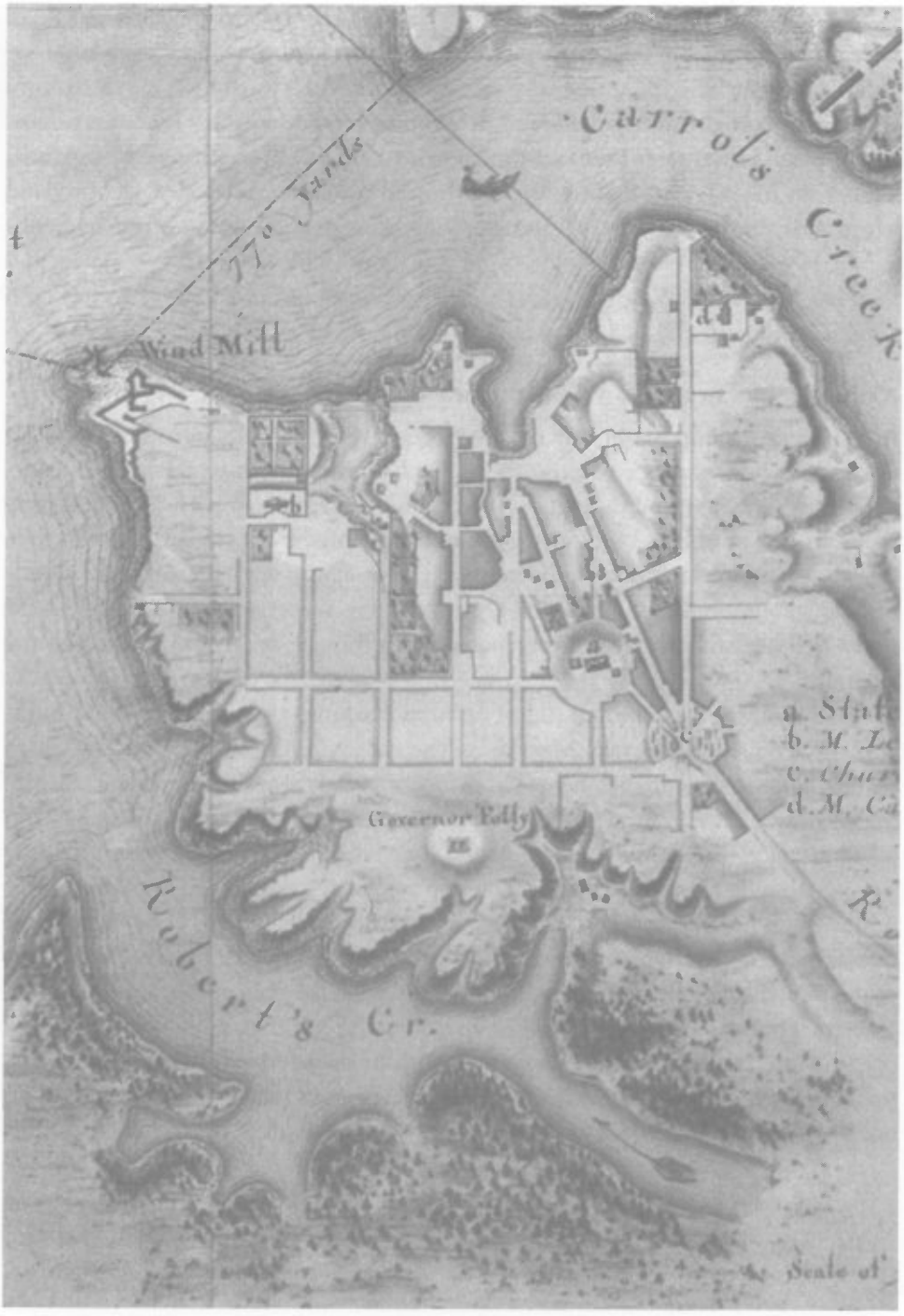
In April 1650, Lord Baltimore finally wrote a letter confirming Brent's sale of his cattle, with the notable exception of any she had kept or sold to her brother or sister. In effect he confiscated any cattle that had previously belonged to him. Giles Brent had already scouted land in Virginia and perhaps this letter persuaded them to move. Margaret Brent sent the new governor of Maryland, William Stone, a letter on July 22, 1650, stating that she "would not intangle my Self in Maryland because of the Ld Baltemore's disaffections to me and the Instruccons he Sends ag[ains]t us." Giles Brent had registered significant land holdings in Virginia and they left Maryland by August 1651. Margaret Brent continued active in her own affairs, but apparently did not pursue a public career in Virginia.[43]

A Stabilizing Force and a Destabilizing Symbol

A colony in trouble might rely on a Margaret Brent to help introduce stability, yet that very dependence became an intolerable reminder of weakness and disorder. Maryland's status with England, as a Catholic colony in a period of increasing religious unrest and as a colony that could possibly be subsumed into Virginia, was too precarious to grant this symbol of chaos legitimacy. The Maryland colony needed stability in function as well as form. Brent may have been essential to the first of these, but formalizing her power would have utterly compromised the latter.

Margaret Brent made full use of her opportunities and maximized her influence in seventeenth-century Maryland. The colony required her skills, although the tendency to obscure her gender in the records indicates the uneasiness many of the colonists felt about her prominence. In requesting the vote, Brent sought to take her place among her peer group at a time when the qualifications for legislative position were most malleable. She also sought the authority that would allow her to fulfill her responsibilities more adroitly. She surely knew that considerable doubt existed over whether she would get the vote, but she pursued it at the opportune moment. When she did not get the vote, the reason was not difficult to discern. The colonial leaders needed Brent's skills, yet that same need provoked resentment. The symbolism of a woman with political power was too strong and the colony chose to sacrifice the skills she offered rather than legitimize this symbol of their own inadequacy.

43. Spruill, "Mistress Margaret Brent," 267–8; *Arch. Md.* 10:104; *Arch. Md.*, 1:316–17. Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623–1800* (Richmond: Press of the Dietz Printing Co., 1934), 218, 224.



Annapolis during the years of the American Revolution. Detail, Plan of the Harbor and City of Annapolis, drawn by Major Capitaine, aide to the Marquis de Lafayette, *1781. (Courtesy, Maryland State Archives.)*

Shattered Isolation: The Raid of the *Otter* and Maryland's Chaotic Turn to Independence, March–July, 1776

ROBERT W. TINDER

As darkness fell in the evening of Tuesday, March 5, 1776, two armed pilot-boats returned to Annapolis harbor from their patrol in the Chesapeake Bay. The commanders of the swift-sailing craft had been ordered by the Maryland Council of Safety to search for British warships, "to gain and communicate notice of any attempt that might be made by the men of war to come into this province." Captains John Pitt and Joseph Middleton steered their vessels to berths at the town wharf, then rushed to the Council of Safety's chambers to report what they had seen just hours before: three British warships—a sloop of war and two smaller escort vessels—heading toward Annapolis, "considerably above the mouth of Patuxent [River]."[1]

The American rebellion had expanded into war. Fighting had erupted in Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Virginia. Boston had been occupied by British troops since 1774, its harbor closed by Royal Navy warships; on land the town was enveloped by General George Washington's rebel army. The Declaration of Independence was only four months away. In Maryland, however, political leaders had attempted to dissociate the colony from the burning conflict by issuing expressions of loyalty and adopting resolutions and proclamations opposing separation from England. Political isolation, though, could not relieve a sense of foreboding, a nagging worry that the violence just to the south in Virginia would reach Annapolis. Only two months earlier, on New Year's Day, British warships had bombarded the port of Norfolk, igniting fires that had burned for days and destroyed the town.

By eight o'clock Tuesday evening five members of the seven-member Council of Safety had gathered in an emergency meeting to hear Captains Pitt and

1. Maryland Council of Safety journal entry, January 22, 1776, Journal of the Maryland Convention, July 26–August 14, 1775 and Maryland Council of Safety Orders to Colonels Thomas Dorsey and John Weems, March 5, 1776, in Journal and Correspondence of the Maryland Council of Safety, August 29, 1775–July 6, 1776, in William Hand Browne, ed. *Archives of Maryland* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1883–), 11:103, 104, 201.

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Middleton describe the warships they had spotted. The council's president, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, scratched a quick note of warning and sent a courier galloping to Baltimore Town. "We have just received intelligence that a large ship supposed to be a 20 gun man of war and two sloops are on their way up the Bay their destination is not known but as they may intend for your town, we send off this express that you may be on your guard and make all the preparations in your power for your defense."[2]

The revolutionary Council of Safety had assumed executive powers, replacing the colony's proprietary governor, Robert Eden. As president, Jenifer was the *de facto* governor of Maryland. Fearing Annapolis was the warships' target, Jenifer issued orders to commanders of nearby militia units. "The City is now weak and we judge it necessary to have all the men drawn to town we can for its defense," he told Colonel John Hall. "You will give directions to all the companies and men in your battalion that can be got ready to repair as soon as possible to town." Jenifer ordered Colonels Thomas Dorsey and John Weems to assemble their battalions and await instructions. "It is supposed they are now off Annapolis. . . . it is absolutely necessary to have your battalion in readiness to march at an hour's warning."[3]

News of the warships' approach set off a panic in Annapolis. Terrified residents packed their valuables, furniture, and clothing onto wagons, carts, and horses and began an exodus out of the city. Merchants, expecting the British "to destroy this city" as they had Norfolk, emptied their shops and warehouses. One merchant moved "some east India goods about ten miles."[4]

Months earlier, as the crisis with the British Parliament had intensified, Maryland's revolutionary government had taken basic precautionary measures. The Council of Safety had ordered most of the public records evacuated in January, after news of Norfolk's destruction made its way up the Chesapeake Bay. The records of the Provincial and Chancery Courts, the Land Office, Commissary's Office, and the Secretary's Office, along with the records of Anne Arundel County,

2. Maryland Council of Safety journal entry, March 5, 1776; Maryland Council of Safety to the Committee of Observation of Baltimore Town, March 5, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:201, 202.

3. Council Orders to Colonels John Hall, Thomas Dorsey, and John Weems, March 5, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:201.

4. "Extract of a Letter from Annapolis, in Maryland, March 15, 1776," from the *Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser*, May 24, 1776, in William Bell Clark, ed., *Naval Documents of the American Revolution* (Washington: U.S. Navy Department, 1969), 4:356, 357 (hereinafter *NDAR*). For additional narratives of the approach of the warships see "Annapolis, March 14," from *Maryland Gazette*, Thursday, March 14, 1776, in ibid., 340, 341. Detailed narratives written by the Council of Safety are found in "Narrative of the Alarm Over the Sloop *Otter*," enclosed in Maryland Council of Safety to Virginia Committee of Safety March 13, 1776, printed in ibid., 325, 326; and Maryland Council of Safety to the Deputies of Maryland in Congress, March 11, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:326–28.

had been moved to the town of Upper Marlborough. But Annapolis, the center of Maryland's government, and Baltimore, the burgeoning center of transportation and commerce, were vulnerable to surprise attack. Adjacent to the Chesapeake Bay, their harbors were within easy reach of warships. To protect the towns, the revolutionary Provincial Convention, which had assumed legislative power in the colony, had ordered the construction of earthen fortifications. Contracts had been authorized to purchase cannon, small arms, gunpowder, and lead shot. Heavy weapons were scarce. "We are much at a loss for cannon," the Council of Safety wrote to Maryland's delegates to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, urging them to purchase the cannon from New York and Pennsylvania. "We shall want about thirty or forty eighteen-pounders." Work on the fortifications had barely begun, and stockpiles of ammunition remained small. Now, with British warships approaching and the realization that Annapolis was virtually undefended, apprehension quickly grew into panic.[5]

In the cold, dark March night, the roads of Annapolis were clogged with frightened residents leaving town on foot or horseback, in wagons, carriages. Fleeing civilians gave way before companies of soldiers marching toward the capital, summoned by the Council of Safety. Around midnight a furious gale roared out of the Chesapeake. Its winds lashed the city with drenching rain, turning dirt roads to slippery mud and throwing Annapolis "into the greatest confusion," recalled an eyewitness. "What with the darkness of the night, thunder, lightning, and rain, cries of women and children, people hurrying their effects into the country, drums beating to arms, etc. I can assure you it was by no means an agreeable scene."[6] Remaining in the panic-stricken capital through the night, Jenifer and the other officials waited anxiously for the approaching raiders.

As it happened, the three warships had halted to ride out the storm. For the next two days they cruised south of Annapolis, ambushing the few merchant vessels that, despite warnings, had ventured out of the Patuxent and Chester Rivers. The largest of the raiders was His Majesty's Sloop of War *Otter*, a three-masted cruiser of the type commonly used by the British to patrol American sea lanes. Mounting sixteen six-pounder carriage guns, the warship was ninety-seven feet long, twenty-seven feet wide, and carried a crew of 125 men. Sailing with the *Otter* were two smaller vessels: the sloop *Samuel* carrying light bulwark-mounted swivel guns, and the schooner *Edward*, armed with six cannon and four swivel guns.[7]

5. Orders of the Maryland Council of Safety, January 20, 1776; Maryland Council of Safety to the Deputies for Maryland in Congress, January 20, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:99, 101.
6. "Extract of a Letter from Annapolis, in Maryland, March 15, 1776," in *NDAR*, 4:356, 357.
7. Robert Gardiner, ed., *Navies and the American Revolution, 1775–1783* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 56; Ernest McNeill Eller, ed., *Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution* (Centreville, Md.: Tidewater Publishers, 1981), 217.

The warships had been detached from the British squadron blockading the lower Chesapeake Bay. The *Otter* was slower and less maneuverable than the rebel vessels it would encounter in the Chesapeake, and the three-hundred-ton square-rigged ship required thirteen feet of water beneath its hull. To compensate, the nimble *Edward* and *Samuel* were added to the mission as chase vessels. These shallow-draft escorts easily overtook fleeing vessels that ran close inshore or darted into small rivers or coves. By early Friday morning, March 8, the *Edward* and *Samuel* had captured three sloops, two schooners, and a large cargo ship, herding the victims into a convoy with the *Otter* as the raider resumed its northward course. By mid-day the warships and their captives were near Annapolis, where expectant lookouts watched them appear: nine sets of sails slowly taking shape out of a humid haze covering the bay. Six of the emerging shapes were American vessels, seized suddenly as prizes of a war that Maryland officials dreaded and had labored to avoid.[8]

Commanding the expedition was Matthew Squire, captain of the *Otter*. A veteran raider on the Virginia coast, Squire was notorious for ruthless pursuit of American shipping. For several months, Squire's *Otter* had served as the headquarters of Virginia's governor, Lord Dunmore. Driven from the mainland by revolutionary forces, Dunmore had positioned his small fleet off Norfolk. From there he launched attacks against rebel strongholds and blockaded the lower Chesapeake Bay.[9]

On January 1, 1776, the *Otter*'s guns had been turned on Norfolk. Along with four other warships, the *Otter* had drawn close to the town, and for days, rebel sharpshooters firing from waterfront buildings had peppered Dunmore's fleet with musket fire. Frustrated at the rebels' refusal to sell provisions, and enraged by the harassing fire, Dunmore ordered the warships to bombard Norfolk. Captain Squire casually noted the action in the *Otter*'s logbook. "At 4 pm began a brisk fire from the squadron on the town and continued till 11 during which time the boats landed and set fire to the different wharfs, had two men wounded by the rebels' musketry. The rebels set fire to many parts of the back of the town." (The role of rebel forces in the destruction of Norfolk was not immediately reported. Virginia officials placed sole blame for the tragedy on Dunmore and the British warships.)[10]

8. Journal of H.M. Sloop *Otter* Wednesday, February 28–March 8, 1776, *NDAR*, 4:112, 271–72; "Narrative of the Alarm Over the Sloop *Otter*," enclosed in Maryland Council of Safety to the Virginia Committee of Safety, March 13, 1776, *NDAR*, 325, 326.

9. Eller, *Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution*, 64–67.

10. Journal of H.M. Sloop *Otter*, January 1, 1776, *NDAR*, 3:565; John E. Selby, *The Revolution in Virginia, 1775–1783* (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1988), 81–85; Eller, *Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution*, 85–89.

Eyewitness reports reached Maryland within days. On January 5, Samuel Purviance Jr., chairman of the Baltimore Committee of Observation, forwarded one account to the Continental Congress: "I thought it a matter of so much importance that the Congress should have the earliest advice." The account described "a continued firing of great guns, and . . . a great flame towards Norfolk." Another account, from a Baltimore newspaper, identified the "*Otter* sloop of war" as one of the ships that "began a heavy cannonading," bringing to bear on Norfolk "upwards of one hundred pieces of cannon."[11]

Two months later Squire and the *Otter* were heading deep into Maryland waters on the first British raid of the American Revolutionary War into the upper Chesapeake Bay. The expedition, an attack on American shipping as far as Baltimore, had been prompted by information secretly supplied to Lord Dunmore by Maryland's deposed governor, Robert Eden. Although Eden had been removed from power by the Provincial Convention, he remained a popular and trusted figure in Annapolis, respectfully addressed as governor, and allowed to remain in the governor's mansion. Frequently consulted by the same leaders who had deposed him, Eden gained access to vital information about revolutionary activities, information he passed to British officials. The message that triggered Squire's raid had been sent shortly before January 11. "Governor Eden of His Majesty's Province of Maryland has transmitted to my Lord Dunmore, information of three small vessels well armed being fitted out from that province, I shall use every possible step to intercept them," wrote Captain Henry Bellew, commander of the frigate *Liverpool*, in a dispatch to the Admiralty in London.[12]

On February 27, Squire received orders to conduct the raid. A new commander had arrived to take charge of the Chesapeake Squadron. Captain Andrew Snape Hamond, commander of the forty-four-gun man-of-war H.M.S *Romulus*, had been sent to the Chesapeake with orders to tighten the blockade. When lookouts spotted two of the vessels described by Governor Eden, Hamond ordered Squire to hunt them down, "having received intelligence that there are two armed vessels belonging to the rebels which lately escorted some others laden with flour down the Chesapeake Bay, and are now supposed to be laying off Baltimore." Hamond directed Squire to "use all possible dispatch . . . and proceed immediately up the Bay to Baltimore in search of the above mentioned pirates, to pursue them wherever you may get intelligence of them, and to use every means in your power to take or destroy them." Governor Eden had described three vessels being armed in Baltimore. To prevent the third from escaping, Hamond further or-

11. Samuel Purviance Jr. to John Hancock, Baltimore, January 5, 1776, *NDAR*, 3:565; *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, January 17, 1776.

12. Captain Henry Bellew, R.N., to Philip Stephens, Secretary of the Admiralty, January 11, 1776, *NDAR*, 3:737, 738.

dered Squire, upon his arrival "off Baltimore . . . to endeavor to cut out of the harbor any vessels you may suspect to be laden with any kind of provisions or that have the appearance of being proper for arming." If met with resistance, Squire was authorized to turn Baltimore into another Norfolk. "In case you should be obstructed in so doing, by the town of Baltimore, you are immediately to fire upon the town, and do your utmost to destroy it."[13]

On his way up the bay, Squire was to sweep the waters clear of rebel shipping, "to annoy the rebels by every means in your power, and to seize and detain all American vessels you may meet with, as well as those of any other country that may be trading with the Americans, and send them to me for examination."

As a secondary objective, Squire was ordered to find provisions in Maryland, "particularly fresh meat." Hamond told Squire to pay "ready money for everything you take from them." But if Marylanders refused to sell their produce, "you are to take it by force of arms."

Finally, the newly arrived commander gave Squire a package containing several messages that had been forwarded from Boston, headquarters of British occupation forces. "Call at Annapolis, and deliver the enclosed packet to Governor Eden." Along with the packet of messages, Hamond included a letter he had written to Governor Eden. In it, he asked Eden for a report "of the situation of affairs in your province." In addition, Hamond advised that he stood ready "to cooperate" with Eden "in any measure for the good of his Majesty's Service." At six o'clock in the morning of February 28, a day filled with "hard gales and heavy squalls," the *Otter* and its two escorts "weighed and came to sail," heading up the Chesapeake Bay toward Maryland.[14]

A Delayed Revolution

Emerging out of the haze near Annapolis, the British warships and six captive American vessels marked a turning point for the Maryland colony. The approaching raid signaled the beginning of the end of Maryland's isolation from the growing rebellion—the shattering of the disengagement practiced by the colony's leaders. Although a revolution was underway in Maryland, its severity had been blunted by pro-British political forces. A series of Provincial Conventions, instigated in June 1774 by anti-British activists in Annapolis and Baltimore, had estab-

13. Gardiner, *Navies and the American Revolution, 1775–1783*, 56; Vice Admiral Samuel Graves to Captain Andrew Snape Hamond, R.N., December 25, 1775, *NDAR*, 3:235–37; Captain Andrew Snape Hamond, R.N. to Captain Matthew Squire, H.M.S. *Otter*, February 26, 1776, *NDAR*, 4:92, 93.

14. Captain Andrew Snape Hamond, R.N. to Governor Robert Eden, February 27, 1776, *Roebuck* off Norfolk in Virginia, *NDAR*, 4:101; Journal of H.M. Sloop *Otter*, February 28, 1776, *NDAR*, 4:112.

lished a revolutionary government in the colony. The conventions had usurped the legislative powers of the General Assembly and the executive powers of the governor, but moderate political forces, made up primarily of wealthy landowners and lawyers, men of high social and political standing, had gained control of them. After overthrowing the proprietary government, these political forces stopped short of advocating the "common cause," independence. Driven by complex motivations, including a determination to preserve their status as subjects of England, the political leadership worked in concert with the deposed governor to promote reconciliation with Britain and to stifle efforts to separate Maryland from the Empire.[15]

Governor Eden believed the collaboration of the colony's leaders had enabled him to sap the rebellious spirit in Maryland. Returning to the colony from an extended visit to England, Eden wrote to London in December 1774 that Maryland had become "tolerably quiet since I arrived—Before that, they had in one or two instances been second (I think) in violent measures to Boston." Eight months later, in a report to the Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs, Eden claimed he had successfully slowed the pace of revolution in Maryland by exerting influence over the colony's leaders, "by the most soothing measures I could safely use . . . to preserve some hold on the helm of government, that I might steer, as long as should be possible, clear of those shoals which all here must sooner or later, I fear get shipwrecked upon. I have found great advantage in this as yet."[16]

Paradoxically, events forced those who had collaborated to isolate Maryland from the turmoil in other colonies to cooperate with increasingly hostile measures adopted by the Continental Congress, including prohibiting commerce with Britain, raising regiments of troops, arming merchant vessels, and authorizing fortifications to defend against potential British attacks. Moreover, Maryland had dispatched hundreds of soldiers to join General Washington's army besieging Boston.

Nevertheless, the Provincial Convention had disavowed breaking the political bonds with Britain. When the Second Continental Congress gathered at Philadelphia in May 1775, anti-British passions were aflame. Bloody clashes at Lexington and Concord had taken place only a month earlier. The *rage militaire* else-

15. John Archer Silver, *The Provisional Government of Maryland (1774–1777)*, Vol. 10, Thirteenth Series, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1895), 5–33.

16. Robert Eden to William Eden, Under Secretary of State, December 30, 1774, *NDAR*, 1:45; Robert Eden to Earl of Dartmouth, August 27, 1775, Fisher Transcripts, Maryland Historical Society, quoted in Ronald Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension: Economics, Politics, and the Revolution in Maryland* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 142.

where notwithstanding, Maryland's leaders, while selecting delegates to the Congress, voted to reaffirm the colony's attachment to England. "This convention has nothing so much at heart as a happy reconciliation of the differences between the mother country and the British colonies in North America, upon a firm basis of constitutional freedom." Delegates were ordered to oppose resolutions for independence, what the Convention called "the last extremity."[17] By January 1776, Eden felt confident enough to declare that Maryland's leaders refused to be labeled as rebels. "I am satisfied they are so far from desiring an Independency that if the establishment of it were left to their choice, they would reject it with abhorrence," he wrote to Lord Dartmouth.[18]

At the moment Eden penned his assurance, the concept of independence was rapidly gaining in popularity throughout the colonies, becoming a true "common cause," fired by the electrifying words of Thomas Paine's tract, *Common Sense*: "The cause of America is in great measure the cause of all mankind."[19] Whatever sentiments were growing elsewhere, Maryland's Convention on January 12 had reaffirmed its previous stand and clamped tighter restrictions on its delegates to the Continental Congress. "Do not without the previous knowledge and approbation of the Convention of this province assent to any proposition to declare these colonies independent of the crown of Great Britain." The delegates also were prohibited from approving alliances with foreign powers, or a confederation of the colonies. Three days after the convention voted these restrictions, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer organized a series of meetings between moderate leaders and Governor Eden. Jenifer's intent was to promote reconciliation by constructing a private plan for ending the conflict between the colonies and Parliament. Eden, convinced that leaders in Maryland would never approve independence, boasted to Dartmouth that the idea itself was "incompatible . . . with their real undissembled attachment to, and affection for His Majesty, His Family, and the Mother Country." In resisting independence, Maryland was not alone. Opposition was strong throughout the colonies until early in 1776. As late as May, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania stood with Maryland in objecting to a separation from Britain.[20]

17. J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Maryland: History of Maryland from the Earliest Period to the Present Day* (1879; repr., Hatboro, Pa.: Tradition Press, 1967), 178; Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension*, 141.

18. Governor Robert Eden to Lord Dartmouth, January 25, 1776, in *NDAR*, 3:980–81.

19. Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (New York: Penguin Classics Reprint, 1986), 64; Benson Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind: The Triumph of the American Revolution* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 187.

20. Maryland Convention Instructions to Delegates to Congress, quoted in Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension*, 154, 155; Silver, *Provisional Government of Maryland*, 34; Scharf, *History of Maryland*, 197; Samuel B. Griffith, *The War for American Independence* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 288–91.

For the president of the Council of Safety, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, a man who skillfully commuted between two incompatible worlds, the British warships approaching Annapolis represented a devastating personal defeat. While zealously guarding his status within the old, dying world of loyalty to Britain, Jenifer had achieved enormous influence in the uncertain seas of revolution. Now those worlds were about to collide. A tobacco planter and merchant, a fourth generation Marylander, Jenifer had acquired great wealth from the plantation economy. One of his estates, "Retreat," was located near the busy harbor town of Port Tobacco. During a long career in the proprietary government, Jenifer had held numerous judgeships and offices. A consummate negotiator, he had been a member of the commission that settled the boundary dispute between Maryland and Pennsylvania, clearing the way for the survey that established the Mason-Dixon Line. By 1776, Jenifer enjoyed the privileges of membership in Governor Eden's inner circle, holding two important colonial posts: chief agent of Maryland's last proprietor, Henry Harford, and receiver general of revenues.

As tensions between Britain and the colonies worsened, Jenifer emerged as one of the chief proponents of reconciliation. At the same time, however, he became one of the most prominent members of Maryland's revolutionary government, strengthening his associations with leading anti-British agitators—Samuel Chase and William Paca of Annapolis, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, and Samuel Purviance Jr. of Baltimore. In a twist of irony, Jenifer, the trusted confidant of Robert Eden, was elected by the Provincial Convention to serve as president of the Council of Safety, supplanting Eden and becoming Maryland's governor during the colony's transition to sovereign state. Now the warships approaching Annapolis were a menacing sign that Jenifer's fine balance was in jeopardy.[21]

By three o'clock Friday afternoon it was clear that the capital city, at least for the moment, was not the target of the British raid. After setting fire to a small sloop overtaken at the mouth of the Severn River, Squire's convoy sailed out of sight. Jenifer sent a rider to Baltimore with the cryptic report: "The man of war with her tenders have passed by this harbor and are standing up the Bay, we presume for your town."[22] For Jenifer and the other leaders, relief at seeing the convoy pass Annapolis was momentary, soon replaced by a new anxiety. No one could imagine what would happen when the warships reached Baltimore.

21. Edward C. Papenfuse, et. al., *A Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature, 1635–1789*, 2 vols. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press and The Hall of Records of the State of Maryland, 1985), 2:485–86.

22. Council of Safety to the Committee of Observation for Baltimore County, March 7, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:209. This was more likely written March 8. See Maryland Council of Safety to Committee of Safety of Virginia, Saturday, March 9, 1776: "Yesterday half past three post meridian they hove in sight and pushed fast up the Bay, having taken several small vessels on their way," ibid., 217.

The first reports of the raiders had set off a panic in Baltimore similar to that in Annapolis. Families and store owners packed valuables and fled the town. Town leaders ordered the county records evacuated from the Court House to a safer location inland. Militia and regular soldiers were summoned; trenches were dug, and breastworks thrown up.[23]

Baltimore Town, still in its infancy in 1776, had rapidly overtaken Annapolis as Maryland's center of transportation and commerce. Its explosive growth had been stimulated by recent immigrants to America, merchants, entrepreneurs, risk-takers. The politics of these immigrants, who quickly rose to positions of leadership, diverged sharply from the politics practiced by leaders in Annapolis. Only thirty land miles to the north, Baltimore was like a town in another colony—radical, anti-British, filled with activists for the "common cause." Outnumbered and excluded from power in Annapolis, Baltimore's leaders cemented alliances with revolutionary activists in other colonies through Sons of Liberty organizations and committees of correspondence. When protest grew into rebellion, these old patriot associations, some with emerging leaders of the Continental Congress, became the foundation for a trusted reliance on Baltimore for logistics and transportation, as well as lucrative contracts for the town's businesses and shipyards. By 1776, Baltimore merchants had gained a reputation for boldly running fast cargo vessels through the British blockade, outbound filled with grain and tobacco to the Caribbean islands or Europe, inbound loaded with arms and ammunition for the rebellion. The two "pirates" Captain Squire had been directed to destroy had been refitted and armed by a Baltimore shipyard. Under contract with the Continental Congress, the shipyard had transformed two merchant vessels, the schooner *Scorpion* and sloop *Falcon*, into the first cruisers of the infant Continental Navy, named *Wasp* and *Hornet*. Unfortunately, the two warships had sailed from Baltimore in December to join Captain Ezek Hopkins' Continental squadron in the Delaware River.[24]

Yet as Captain Squire and his flotilla closed in on the port, two other warships, larger and more powerful, were nearing completion. One was the twenty-eight-gun frigate *Virginia*, under construction for the Continental Navy at George Wells' Fells Point shipyard. The other was the third vessel Governor Eden had

23. Eller, *Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution*, 21–22, 216–20; Maryland Council of Safety to Committee of Safety of Virginia, March 9, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:217; Article, "Dunlap's Maryland Gazette Newspaper," Tuesday, March 19, 1776, *NDAR*, 4:412–13.

24. Minutes of the Baltimore Committee, December 18, 1775, *NDAR*, 3:163; Eller, *Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution*, 20–22, 137–38. For discussion of Baltimore's rise to prominence, see Eller, *Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution*, 282–86; Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension*, 74–80; Charles G. Steffen, *The Mechanics of Baltimore: Workers and Politics in the Age of Revolution, 1763–1812* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 3–26, 53–61; and Charles G. Steffen, *From Gentlemen to Townsmen: The Gentry of Baltimore County, Maryland 1660–1776* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1993), 146–63.

described in his secret message to Lord Dunmore. The ship was a former merchantman, the *Sidney*, converted to a warship and renamed the *Defence*. Eighty-five feet in length, with decks reinforced to support twenty cannon, the ship had been purchased by the Council of Safety to protect Maryland ports and shipping. It would be the first warship of the Maryland State Navy. When the *Otter* was spotted Tuesday night, the *Defence* sat helpless at a Fells Point wharf. In the last stages of outfitting, the ship was without crew, its stores had not been loaded on board, and its cannon had not arrived.[25]

Two hours after passing Annapolis, the *Otter* struck a shoal. With its bottom imprisoned in ten feet of water, her forward progress was halted below the Patapsco River, where it remained for hours while its crew backed sails and pushed cannon and stores aft in an effort to shift the vessel's weight and free it. The *Samuel* and *Edward* sailed on to the Patapsco. In their path, fast aground on the north shore at the mouth of the river, was a large ship owned by merchant Isaac Hudson. Filled with wheat and flour purchased by the Continental Congress, the ship had sailed from Baltimore in haste, its captain anxious to get away before the enemy raiders arrived, but as the ship rounded North Point, it had struck a sand bar. The swift escorts moved alongside and seized the helpless ship. During the next few hours several other vessels sailed down from the upper Chesapeake and were quickly intercepted as well. The *Samuel* and *Edward* and their crowd of prizes anchored for the night near Hudson's grain ship at the mouth of the Patapsco, waiting for the next tide to free the prize. They were clustered about twelve miles east of Baltimore and five miles north of the stranded *Otter*.[26]

Meanwhile, American lookouts reported that the *Otter* appeared to be anchored in the bay not far from Annapolis. Governor Eden approached Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer with an offer to communicate with the British captain. Unaware that Eden was feeding information to the British, Jenifer agreed to allow William Eddis to visit the warship. Eddis, a close associate of Eden's, had held several positions in the proprietary government, including surveyor and customs official. A small schooner delivered Eddis to the *Otter*, where he remained onboard for several hours conferring with Captain Squire. When Eddis left the warship, he carried with him the packet of messages Squire had received from Captain Hamond addressed to Governor Eden.

Returning to Annapolis at ten o'clock that evening, Eddis delivered the messages to Eden, then both Eddis and Eden visited the Council of Safety, keeping the packet of messages secret. Eddis reported to the council that Squire had learned of

25. Eller, *Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution*, 19, 21, 22, 137; Dimensions, Maryland Ship *Defence* Inventory, Lux and Bowley, Agents, March 1, 1776, *NDAR*, 3:1371–75.

26. Journal of H.M. Sloop *Otter*, Captain Matthew Squire, Friday March 8, 1776, in *NDAR*, 4:271, 272; Maryland Council of Safety to Committee of Safety of Virginia, March 9, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:217.

the arming of the *Wasp* and *Hornet*, and that the cruisers had sailed from Baltimore. He also reported that the captain knew Maryland was arming the *Defence*—Squire belligerently called it "a privateer, avowedly fitted out at Baltimore for hostile purposes." Squire demanded the surrender of the *Defence*, along with other vessels in Baltimore's harbor "laden with flour." In a letter to Governor Eden, which Eden turned over to the Council of Safety, Squire warned he was "under an absolute necessity to seize whatever might come within his power." On the other hand, if his orders "were complied with, not the least damage should ensue to any individual or to the town of Baltimore." Squire also demanded that Annapolis turn over meat and other provisions for the use of the *Otter* and other ships in the Chesapeake blockade.[27]

As he listened to Eddis relate Squire's demands, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer grew increasingly unsettled. Unaware that Governor Eden had betrayed Maryland's new warship, Jenifer saw his work on behalf of reconciliation suddenly wrecked by this commander of a minor British cruiser bent on destroying the *Defence*. The ship had been armed at the insistence of Baltimore's leaders. Jenifer sent a messenger on a late night ride to Baltimore with a warning: "The captain is to send a flag in to demand the ship *Defence*." The distraught Jenifer then added a pitiful lament, "I wish with all my heart our stores were out and the ship at the bottom of the sea."

William Eddis did his best to reassure the dejected Jenifer by relating further details of his visit to the warship. Eddis said he had persuaded Squire that Maryland's leaders were loyal to the Empire, possessing a "settled aversion to any design of establishing an independency: for an assurance of which I referred him to the instructions given to their delegates in Congress and to the proceedings of the late convention." Eddis had described Maryland to the captain as "convenient and agreeable as the nature of the times would admit." Jenifer, perhaps heartened by Eddis, in turn tried to reassure Baltimore's leaders. Squire, Jenifer said, had "behaved politely." The council president, wistful for less contentious circumstances, added, "Was he to come here in peaceable times I should be glad to shew him the civility due to a gentlemen." But sentiments could not mask the present reality: Maryland was under attack.[28]

Preparing for Battle

In Baltimore, meanwhile, civic leaders were frantically preparing for battle. The panic following the first reports of approaching warships had subsided, replaced with determined activity. Militia volunteers had poured into the town and were

27. William Eddis, *Letters from America,* Aubrey C. Land, ed. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1969), 139.

28. Jenifer and Council to Charles Carroll Barrister, March 8, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:218; Orders from Captain Andrew Snape Hamond, R.N., to Captain Matthew Squire, H.M.S. *Otter*, February 26, 1776, in *NDAR*, 4:92–93.

put under the command of Captain Samuel Smith. Earthen breastworks and batteries were constructed on Fells and Whetstone Points. (Whetstone was the site of the future Fort McHenry.) Cannon had been rushed to Fells Point and were being mounted on the *Defence*. Seamen from merchant craft anchored in the harbor had volunteered to serve, enough to crew the ship and several smaller vessels. Samuel Purviance Jr., chairman of the Committee of Observation, Baltimore's *de facto* governing council, was in charge of organizing the town's defenses. At one o'clock in the morning of Friday, March 8, while the raiders were still below Annapolis, Purviance sent a report to the Council of Safety describing Baltimore's preparations. The cannon for the *Defence* "are just now arrived and alongside, and [the ship] will be in a very good posture of defense by sunrise tomorrow. We have hove up a breastwork at Fells Point near the ship and shall get several cannon mounted on it by 8 o'clock. Major Gist and the regulars are all marching to Whetstone to entrench tonight."[29]

Samuel Purviance Jr. was a fiery revolutionary. Moving his commercial activities to Baltimore from Pennsylvania around 1767, Purviance and his brother Robert maintained contacts with Philadelphia merchants and patriot leaders, later expanding the contacts to include members of the Continental Congress. Samuel quickly became a leader of Baltimore's merchant community. For years, he had advocated defiance of Parliament's restrictions on American commerce. As the imperial crisis worsened, and the British navy began attacking American vessels, Purviance urged the arming of ships to protect Baltimore's commercial fleet. By late 1775 he was directly responsible for measures he had advocated, managing the conversion of the Maryland warship *Defence* for the Council of Safety and supervising the construction of the frigate *Virginia* for the Continental Congress. Purviance represented Baltimore at the first and fourth Provincial Conventions, but his revolutionary activities there were thwarted by pro-British leaders. His most significant contribution to Maryland's revolutionary transition was as chairman of the Baltimore Committee of Observation.[30]

Purviance had initially planned to wait for the *Otter* to draw close to the town, to within range of the gun batteries his work crews were constructing. The hastily outfitted *Defence* would be exposed to battle only if the raiders attacked. On Friday evening he ordered the *Defence* towed to a spot in the harbor where its guns could assist the new batteries at Fells and Whetstone Points. Other defenses were readied as well, as measures of last resort. Throughout the night commercial vessels—schooners, brigs, and sloops—were towed across the harbor and anchored in the narrow ship channel near Whetstone Point. If the British attacked,

29. Baltimore Committee to Maryland Council of Safety, March 8, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:218–19.

30. Papenfuse, *Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature*, 2:667–69; Steffen, *From Gentlemen to Townsmen*, 158–63; Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension*, 142–43.

the anchored vessels would be sunk, making their masts and hulls obstructions that would prevent the enemy warships from entering the inner harbor and deny them close access to the town's wharves, warehouses, and commercial and residential neighborhoods.[31]

Early Saturday morning, Purviance's plans suddenly changed. Alert lookouts had noticed the frantic efforts of the *Otter*'s crew to free it from the shoal. A courier raced on horseback to Baltimore with the news that the warship was aground and the British force divided. With the *Otter* immobile, the escort vessels guarding Hudson's grain ship and the other prizes were exposed and vulnerable. Purviance jumped at the opportunity. Rather than wait for Squire to bombard Baltimore, as he had Norfolk, Purviance decided to strike the first blow. He ordered the commander of the *Defence* to launch an attack.

Captain James Nicholson had been appointed to command the *Defence* in late 1775, while work was underway to convert the cargo ship into Maryland's first warship. Born in Chestertown, Maryland, the thirty-nine-year-old Nicholson had served for many years in the British navy and at age twenty-five had participated in the capture of Havana in 1762. During the Revolutionary War the roster of Continental Navy captains would list him higher in seniority than John Paul Jones. But Nicholson's naval career was tarnished by tragedy. Given command of two Continental frigates, he surrendered both to the British. However, Nicholson's bold actions defending Baltimore, Annapolis, and commercial shipping in the bay during several British incursions earned him the status of a local hero. Ironically, as James Nicholson steered the hastily armed *Defence* toward the enemy raiders, he sailed past his first ill-fated future command, the Continental Navy frigate *Virginia*, nearing completion in the shipyard of George Wells.[32]

Purviance ordered Nicholson to first retake Mr. Hudson's grain ship. He cautioned the captain to remember his main responsibility—protecting Baltimore. If the smaller warships "escape you," and join the *Otter,* Purviance told Nicholson, "it would be improper for you to attack them altogether." If the warships appeared to be "coming to attack you, it would be most advisable for you to return to Whetstone Point or Fells Point to be ready to protect the town." As the *Defence* was readied for sea, several owners volunteered their vessels to assist in the attack. Crews loaded cannon and ammunition onto the schooner *Resolution* and several sloops.[33]

In the darkness before dawn, the *Defence* unfurled its sails. Followed by the

31. Purviance to Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, undated but apparently enclosed with Baltimore Committee to Council of Safety, March 8, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:219–20.

32. Scharf, *History of Maryland*, 201–3; Eller, *Chesapeake Bay in the American Revolution*, 148–51, 164–65.

33. Minutes of the Baltimore Committee of Observation, March 8 and 9, 1776, *NDAR*, 4:239–40, 268.

Resolution and other vessels, the ship left Baltimore and slipped down the Patapsco. A thick fog soon enveloped the vessels and masked their approach to the unsuspecting British tenders anchored near the grain ship. On the *Defence*, 220 armed troops—militia volunteers and the warship's complement of marines—crowded the rails, waiting to go into action. "Capt. Samuel Smith's whole company . . . are gone volunteers . . . and many others would have gone had [Nicholson] room or service for them," Samuel Purviance wrote to Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer. Merchant seamen, as well, had volunteered to crew the vessels for the dangerous mission. Purviance had combed Baltimore's wharves and taverns asking sailors to help rescue the grain ship. "We in less than half an hour got near a dozen brave fellows and several masters of ships to go on board and in half an hour after had the ship under way. And several others offer to go in the schooner." The *Resolution* and other vessels, too, "were crowded with men to assist in case of an engagement, which would have been dreadful, as we understand Capt. Nicholson intended to grapple at once."[34]

Concealed by fog, the Baltimore vessels had crept to within two miles when suddenly the mist thinned and the *Samuel* and *Edward* came into view. "All hands gave three loud cheers," wrote Lieutenant Joseph Smith, commander of *Defence*'s marines, describing the scene aboard the warship. The cheers were so loud they "made the very welkin [air] ring." The shouting startled the crews on board the *Samuel* and *Edward*, who looked across the water to see the *Defence* and her small fleet bearing down on them out of the mist with hundreds of troops crowding their decks. The two British vessels "immediately made sail, and left all their prizes in our possession."[35] The escorts hurried down the bay to the safety of the *Otter*'s guns, while the *Defence* moved in and recaptured the grain ship and five other vessels.

All day Saturday, Samuel Purviance anxiously waited for news of the action. Finally, at nine o'clock in the evening a message arrived. Purviance sent a dispatch to Annapolis. "We have just received an express from Capt. Nicholson that he had retaken Mr. Hudson's ship with everything on board safe, and that he was taking out some of the flour in the retaken vessels, five in number, and we also sent two vessels more to lighten her, so that we hope to have the ship up tomorrow."[36]

Scurrying to escape the Baltimore vessels, the *Samuel* and *Edward* had fired signal cannon to attract the attention of Captain Squire on the *Otter*, who was still

34. Samuel Purviance to Daniel of Saint Thomas Jenifer, quoted above, undated but probably written on the morning of March 9, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:219–20; Maryland Council of Safety to the Deputies of Maryland in Congress, March 11, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:236–37.

35. Letter, Joseph Smith to Elnathan Smith, March 20, 1776, *NDAR*, 4:422–24.

36. Baltimore Committee of Observation to the Maryland Council of Safety, March 9, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:227–28.

working to release his ship from the grip of the shoal. Seeing the escorts fleeing under full sail, Squire ordered sailors over the side into longboats to pull the *Otter* free, and soon the warship was under way. Meanwhile, as the crews from the Baltimore vessels worked to lighten Hudson's grain ship, Nicholson kept the *Defence* on patrol nearby in case the British attacked. Lieutenant Smith recalled, "the *Defence* stretched backward and forward below her prizes and at length, seeing the *Otter* get under way, came to, close by Hudson's vessel and prepared for battle expecting she was coming up to her, but to the amazement of our brave countrymen [the *Otter*] bore away." Another loud cheer rang out on the Baltimore vessels. The troops, though, were not completely satisfied, according to Lieutenant Smith. "Though our ship was inferior to that of the enemy, we were much disappointed in not attacking them, for some time before night the British made sail and we have not seen them since."[37] Nevertheless, their bold thrust toward the enemy vessels had thwarted Squire's mission. When the *Defence* and other vessels shepherded their prizes back to Fells Point, Nicholson and his volunteer sailors and troops were hailed as heroes.[38]

Captain Squire, surprised by the ferocity of Baltimore's action, decided that remaining in the neighborhood of the town posed too much risk. Collecting the two escorts and his remaining prizes, he turned the *Otter* around and headed down the bay. In the *Otter*'s log he jotted the observation that the rebels had made the Patapsco too hazardous for navigation, that "all the marked trees [navigation aids indicating water depth] were cut down, and that chains were across the rivers," and "large guns were fixed on the Point." Squire also recorded that he still had five captive vessels, making no mention that he had lost six others to the *Defence*, the "pirate" he had been sent to destroy. Nor did he report the challenge made by the armed Baltimore vessels. In Squire's version, two rebel ships had run away from him. "Found the two sail to be privateers who got under weigh, and were working up."[39]

Having failed in his primary mission, Squire sailed only a short distance before anchoring his convoy off Annapolis harbor. It was now the capital's turn to be threatened. At 5:30 that evening, the *Otter*'s longboat brought two officers under a white flag to the city dock. They were taken to Governor Eden's residence, where they delivered another letter from Captain Squire. It contained a startling demand. In addition to fresh provisions, Squire now ordered the surrender of a merchant ship the Maryland leaders had concealed from view up the Severn River.

37. Maryland Council of Safety to the Deputies of Maryland in Congress, March 11, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:236–37; Joseph Smith to Elnathan Smith, March 20, 1776, *NDAR*, 4:422–24.

38. *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette*, March 12, 1776, *NDAR*, 4:313–14.

39. Journal of H.M. Sloop *Otter*, Captain Matthew Squire, *NDAR*, 4:271–72.

"I am well informed that a New England vessel loaded with corn and flour is up the river." Squire warned that he was going to seize the vessel, and "must hope the inhabitants will not molest the tenders [*Samuel* and *Edward*]" when they entered the river "to get her out."

Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer and at least one other member of the Council of Safety were in the room when the two officers delivered Squire's letter. At Jenifer's request, Eden wrote a reply asking Squire for time to consider his demands. "By the request of those gentlemen I . . . am to request you to send your boat ashore with a flag at 9 o'clock tomorrow morning against which time they will prepare an answer to your application."[40]

The British officers were treated with great hospitality, according to William Eddis, who later described the meeting as friendly, one that included probably a meal and several rounds of traditional toasts. "The officer . . . was received with respect; two gentlemen of the council of safety were present at the delivery of [Squire's] message; and the day was concluded at the governor's in a sociable manner."[41]

Squire's threats weighed heavily upon Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, the more so since the British officers had warned that Maryland should expect more trouble in the near future. At midnight, Jenifer sent to Baltimore a summary of what he had learned. "They confessed one of their tenders was in great danger of being taken, but that Captain Squire bore away to prevent great effusion of blood." But another, stronger attack was certain. "We conceive that [Squire] will loiter about 'till he is reinforced. We perceived a small vessel making down the Bay not unlikely with intelligence to the *King-Fisher* who the [officers] said, might be expected to relieve the *Otter*. Therefore you will be pleased to provide against the worst." Annapolis, too, had been threatened, Jenifer told Baltimore's leaders, but he assured them, "we are well prepared to repel any attempts they may make to land." Jenifer added the Council of Safety's compliments to Baltimore. "We cannot sufficiently commend those brave Sons of Liberty who this day stood forth so gallantly in defense of their country." The next day, Jenifer sent a similar message to Maryland's delegates in Philadelphia, but with the addition of another troubling discovery. From the British officers' conversation Jenifer, still not suspecting Governor Eden, concluded that the British had an informer inside Maryland's government. "They know everything which is transacted here and to the northward."[42]

40. Captain Matthew Squire, R.N., to Governor Robert Eden, and Robert Eden to Captain Squire, March 9, 1776, *NDAR*, 4:273.

41. Eddis, *Letters from America*, 140.

42. Maryland Council of Safety to Charles Carroll, Esq. [Barrister] and the Committee of Observation for Baltimore County, March 10, 1776, and Council of Safety to the Deputies of Maryland in Congress, March 11, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:226, 236–37.

When the two officers were again rowed to Annapolis the next morning, they were handed the Council of Safety's answer to Captain Squire. Jenifer and the leaders had decided to gamble that Squire would not risk a fight to seize the demanded supplies or the hidden cargo ship. As Jenifer later explained to the delegates in Congress, "We refused a supply provision and took no notice of that part of his letter which related to the New-England vessel thinking it rather an insult." Nevertheless, Jenifer had prepared to defend the ship, ordering "a guard of about 50 men to be immediately put over her."[43]

At midday on Sunday, the anxious people of Annapolis watched as the *Otter*, its escorts, and its prizes unfurled their sails and, catching the slight breeze, moved slowly down the Chesapeake, gradually disappearing into the haze from which they had so dramatically emerged two days earlier. Captain Squire penned a brief note in the *Otter*'s log, leaving unmentioned his failed transactions with Jenifer and the Council of Safety. "Sunday, March 10: at ½ past 11 A M weighed and came to sail, in company the tenders and prizes. Little wind and hazy. At 8 P M anchored . . . off Sharpes Island."[44]

The Collapse of Maryland's Isolation

From a military perspective, it had been a minor foray, but the first British raid of the Revolutionary War into the upper Chesapeake Bay created consequences that rolled across Maryland like an earthquake. The raid awakened Maryland citizens to imminent dangers their political leaders had regarded lightly. Annapolis and Baltimore, indeed the entire colony, would never be the same. During five days of terror, three small warships had demonstrated the ease with which Maryland's waters could be penetrated and its commerce, its lifeblood, disrupted or destroyed. And another attack appeared certain. Jenifer told the delegates to Congress, "We expect they will return again soon reinforced, as from what we can collect they are bent upon taking or destroying the Defence."[45]

In Baltimore merchant leaders sent work parties to Fells and Whetstone Points to enlarge the artillery breastworks. By March 19 a Baltimore newspaper reported that "two batteries begun on Fell's Point is now completely finished mounting 19 guns, another of 18 guns will be finished in a few days on Whetstone's Point." Orders were sent out for additional cannon and quantities of powder, shot, and muskets. At Whetstone Point, the empty ships were scuttled in the narrow channel. The Baltimore Committee of Observation, counting on the guns of the *De-*

43. Council of Safety to the Deputies of Maryland in Congress, March 11, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:236–37.
44. Journal of H.M. Sloop *Otter*, Captain Matthew Squire, March 10, 1776, *NDAR*, 4:425–26.
45. Council of Safety to the Deputies of Maryland in Congress, March 11, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:236–37.

fence to stop future attacks before they reached the port, fully armed and outfitted the warship for patrols on the bay. Urgency drove the preparations. The *Otter* had been spotted lurking "a few miles below Annapolis, and making prey of everything that floats within their reach," the newspaper reported. "Most of the people in town have moved their families and effects into the country, so that we shall not be so much moved at Capt. Squires' second visit with which he has threatened us and which we expect in a few days, with double fury and double force."[46]

By contrast, Annapolis, despite the public's anxiety, remained without batteries and breastworks, and Maryland's leaders remained slow to construct them. As late as June 27, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer disclosed that "The Council of Safety have not raised any fortifications." Complaining the council lacked the funds for their construction, Jenifer reported, ". . . it was not practicable in their opinion to fortify the city, and place obstructions in the channel of the river, for the sum to which they were limited." Annapolis had also been unsuccessful in its attempts to purchase cannon. "When they can be procured," Jenifer announced, the council planned to erect batteries "on Greenbury's Point, the Wind-mill Point, Horn Point, and places adjacent . . . on the South side of the River." The council president was not convinced the expense of building fortifications was warranted, believing the planned defenses insufficient, except to "prevent landing . . . they might not fully answer the purpose of preventing men of war approaching the place."[47]

But a new urgency had taken hold in areas outside Annapolis. The shock and anxiety following the raid rapidly distilled into a sense of outrage that cascaded into politics and led to a disastrous reversal for pro-British interests. Shattered was the illusion of isolation fostered by leaders who mistakenly assumed their collaboration with Governor Eden had immunized the colony from British attacks. Gone too was the political equilibrium. The raid ignited passions long held in check by leaders in control of the machinery of government. In Baltimore, already a cauldron of anti-British antagonism, activists loudly denounced the leaders of the Provincial Convention. At the height of the crisis, Samuel Purviance had pleaded with Jenifer to keep Baltimore's defensive preparations secret. "For God's sake let not the contents of my letter . . . be made too public, lest any intelligence should be conveyed to Captain Squire to apprize him of our designs." Upon discovering that Jenifer had permitted the governor's close associate, William Eddis, to visit the *Otter*, Baltimore's activists raised a storm of condemnation.

46. Baltimore Committee of Observation to the Council of Safety, March 16, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:255–56; Minutes of the Baltimore Committee of Observation Tuesday, March 12, 1776, *NDAR*, 4:312–14; *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette*, March 19, 1776, ibid., 4:412, 413.

47. Maryland Council of Safety Minutes, Thursday, June 27, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:523–25.

Jenifer, hearing reports of the outcry, complained to Charles Carroll, Barrister, vice-president of the Council of Safety, whom Jenifer had dispatched to the town as the council's representative during the crisis. Carroll attempted to soothe Jenifer's distress but added a remonstrance of his own. "I have not heard them say a single word against the Government sending Mr. Eddis on board the *Otter* (tho' I confess I wish some other person had been pitched upon)." Suspicion of political leaders in Annapolis accelerated in the weeks that followed as anti-British sentiment rose in Maryland. Baltimore's leaders openly accused the politicians of being excessively cautious, cowardly, and even loyalists in disguise.[48]

A month later another crisis added fuel to the anti-British fervor and cast still more suspicion over Governor Eden. Intercepted dispatches, seized from a courier sailing from Lord Dunmore's fleet, revealed that Britain was assembling a military invasion of the colonies. "It is his Majesty's firm resolution . . . that the most vigorous efforts should be made, both by sea and land to reduce his rebellious subjects to obedience." The dispatches were addressed to Eden. A Virginia naval patrol seized them on April 6 after capturing the courier's vessel as it headed to Annapolis. Details of the planned invasion were startling. "Seven regiments and a fleet of frigates and small ships" would be deployed to the southern colonies—possibly to Virginia and the Chesapeake Bay.[49]

Virginia officials sent the dispatches to the Continental Congress, where they created an impetus for declaring independence before the invasion force arrived. In Virginia the threat of invasion silenced opposition to independence. On May 15 the Virginia Convention unanimously ordered its delegates at the Continental Congress to introduce a resolution declaring "the United Colonies free and independent states, absolved of all allegiance to, or dependence upon, the Crown or Parliament of Great Britain." Richard Henry Lee introduced the resolution on June 7. Congress, granting time for other delegates to request from their colonies final instructions on the momentous proposal, delayed a vote until July 1.[50]

In Maryland, meanwhile, the intercepted messages set off a tense confrontation. The dispatches contained evidence that Governor Eden had been secretly supplying information to British officials. "Your letter contains a great deal of very useful information," Lord George Germain wrote in one of the messages, adding, "I had the honor of laying it before the King; and I have it in command

48. Purviance to Jenifer, undated, but apparently a second message enclosed with Baltimore Committee to Council of Safety, March 8, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:219–20; Barrister Carroll to Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer March 9, 1776, ibid., 230–31. Steffen, *The Mechanics of Baltimore*, 62–63; Hoffman, *A Spirit of Dissension*, 164–65.

49. Lord Dartmouth to Robert Eden, July 5, 1775, and Lord George Germain to Robert Eden, December 23, 1775, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:341–45.

50. John E. Selby, *The Revolution in Virginia*, 92–98; Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind*, 190.

from his majesty to express to you his majesty's approbation of your zeal for the public service and of the unalterable attachment you have shown to his person and government from the first commencement of the present unhappy disputes." Even more startling, the intercepted messages implicated Eden in actions far more dangerous than supplying information. Germain had replaced Lord Dartmouth as Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs. The messages, written by Germain and Dartmouth, told Eden to assist the planned invasion. "You will do well to consider of every means by which you may in conjunction with Lord Dunmore give facility and assistance to its operations."[51]

Eden's transactions with British officials had been more treacherous than the dispatches revealed. As early as August 1775, Eden had encouraged Lord Dartmouth to send an invasion force to Maryland. "We have neither troops nor ships of war to support those who would if they had such support to fly to, have long ago asserted the Rights of Great Britain," Eden wrote, adding, "and I can assure your Lordship there are many such . . . still ready, many of them, waiting only for such an opportunity."[52]

Nevertheless, the captured documents, discovered so soon after the raid of the *Otter*, were shocking enough, prompting Baltimore's suspicion to boil over into precipitate action. Virginia officials, wary of their Maryland counterparts, had bypassed Annapolis and forwarded copies of the dispatches to the Committee of Observation in Baltimore, where they arrived on April 14. After reading them, Samuel Purviance sent a detachment of militia to Annapolis with orders to seize Governor Eden and his papers. The orders, however, were countermanded by an outraged Council of Safety, and Purviance was later censured for the "high and dangerous offence" of usurping the power of the council. Three days after Purviance's abortive action, a resolution arrived in Annapolis from the Continental Congress calling for Eden's immediate arrest for carrying on "a correspondence with the British Ministry highly dangerous to the liberties of America." The Council of Safety, however, continuing to protect Eden, ignored the resolution, claiming that only the Provincial Convention, which was not in session, had the authority to arrest the governor. When the convention met in June it, too, refused to arrest Eden. But the evidence against him could not be ignored. The convention, to preserve "public quiet and safety," ordered Eden "to leave this province."[53]

51. Lord Dartmouth to Robert Eden, July 5, 1775, and Lord George Germain to Robert Eden, December 23, 1775, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:341–45.

52. Robert Eden to Lord Dartmouth, Annapolis, August 27, 1775, *NDAR*, 1:1244–45.

53. Resolution in Congress to the Council of Safety of the Colony of Maryland, April 16, 1776, *Archives of Maryland*, 11:334–35; Council of Safety to the Deputies of Maryland in Congress, April 19, 1776, ibid., 11:354–56; Council of Safety Minutes, Friday, April 26, 1776, ibid., 11:386–88; Proceedings of the Maryland Convention, Friday, May 24, 1776, *NDAR*, 5:235–36.

As June drew to a close, the convention was forced to consider the question on independence pending before the Continental Congress. The resolution hung over Annapolis leaders like a gathering cloud of doom, confronting them with the fruits of their uncompromising resolves prohibiting Maryland from joining the growing rebellion. The convention leaders had led Maryland to the brink of permanent separation from the other colonies. Their intransigence had exasperated pro-independence leaders in Congress. "You ask me why we hesitate in Congress. I'll tell you my friend, because we are heavily clogged with instructions from these shamefully interested proprietary people," Richard Henry Lee had complained in late April. Although Lee would not introduce the independence resolution until June 7, by May 20, John Adams could chart the landscape of support and opposition. For the most part, he was encouraged. "Every post and every day rolls in upon us Independence like a torrent," he wrote to James Warren. Adams counted "four colonies to the southward . . . perfectly agreed now with the four to the northward." Of the five uncertain middle colonies, "they are very near it." Except for one. "Maryland remains to be mentioned. That is so eccentric a colony . . . I know not what to say about it or to expect from it." By June 14, with Congress' deadline only two weeks away, Adams, confident of the historic outcome, was deeply troubled that Maryland appeared to be the lone holdout. He expressed his worry to his friend and fellow delegate Samuel Chase, the one delegate from Maryland who openly advocated independence. Chase, still a member of the Provincial Convention and the Council of Safety, was widely respected in Annapolis, and he had a long association with Samuel Purviance and other anti-British leaders in Baltimore. Adams, lamenting the colony's isolation, wrote to Chase, "Maryland now stands alone. I presume she will soon join company—if not she must be left alone."[54]

The winds of change had begun to stir in Maryland. The public had awakened to Maryland's isolation. The chain of recent events—the raid of the *Otter*, the crisis over Governor Eden's secret communiqués, and the pending resolution for independence—had created widespread dissatisfaction. Proponents of independence seized the moment to unleash a blistering campaign of agitation against pro-British leaders. Originating in Baltimore, the carefully orchestrated campaign spread to towns in every Maryland county through the network of committees of correspondence and observation, linked together years before by Sons of Liberty groups to coordinate opposition to British policies. Now the leaders of

54. Richard Henry Lee to Charles Lee, April 22, 1776, Paul H. Smith, et al., eds., *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774–1789*, 25 vols. (Washington: Library of Congress, 1976–2000), 3:571–72; John Adams to James Warren, May 20, 1776, ibid., 4:41–42; John Adams to Samuel Chase, June 14, 1776, ibid., 4:210–211; James Haw, ed., *Stormy Patriot: The Life of Samuel Chase* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1980), 42–57.

Baltimore used the network to undermine the power of the Provincial Convention and Committee of Safety.

Reversing the convention's decrees against independence required communicating with the individual voters within the counties, to mobilize them to create local revolutions. To spread their message to the public the Baltimore activists commanded an acutely powerful weapon. Baltimore's major newspaper, the *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, a weekly publication, bitterly anti-British, was widely read throughout the colony. On May 1, while outrage still smoldered over Governor Eden's secret communications, the newspaper used a long, anonymous front page editorial, ostensibly advocating independence, to launch a sharp attack on the leaders in Annapolis. "We need not be greatly surprised to find, that notwithstanding the very general approbation which Common Sense and Independence have met with in these colonies, some few should rise up and oppose it." Those opposed to independence, the editorial proclaimed, were "such Americans as depend upon, or have expectations from the British court." The editorial boldly branded these "most zealous opposers" of independence "secret enemies to this country, torries in disguise," who through their "greater reputation and success promote diversions, and defeat all the measures the colonies have concerted."[55]

In succeeding weeks the paper continued the attack. On May 15 the Provincial Convention unanimously sent an additional and stronger decree to Philadelphia again prohibiting Maryland's delegates in Congress from voting for independence. The newspaper, in its next edition, published a series of incendiary "Serious Questions addressed to the advocates for Dependence upon the crown of Britain." The final question asked, "Is it not just, therefore, to stigmatize with the name of TORRIES all advocates for dependence upon the present arbitrary and corrupted crown of Britain." The relentless campaign produced a backlash against convention leaders. A surprised and troubled William Eddis, writing to London on June 11, reflected the alarm felt by politicians in Annapolis as he described the activities of the Baltimore leaders. "Violent and inflammatory men are now industriously straining every nerve to excite general confusion and plunge us fatally deep in schemes of independence."[56]

A newly elected convention met in Annapolis on June 21. Confronting the delegates, with only ten days left for consideration, was the resolution pending before Congress to declare independence from Britain. As the convention delegates made their way to Annapolis, in county after county public meetings were held to protest Maryland's refusal to join with the other colonies. Energized by

55. "To the Public," by "Hector," *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser,* May 1, 1776.
56. "Serious Questions addressed to the advocates for Dependence upon the crown of Britain," *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser,* May 22, 1776; Eddis, *Letters from America,* 158–59.

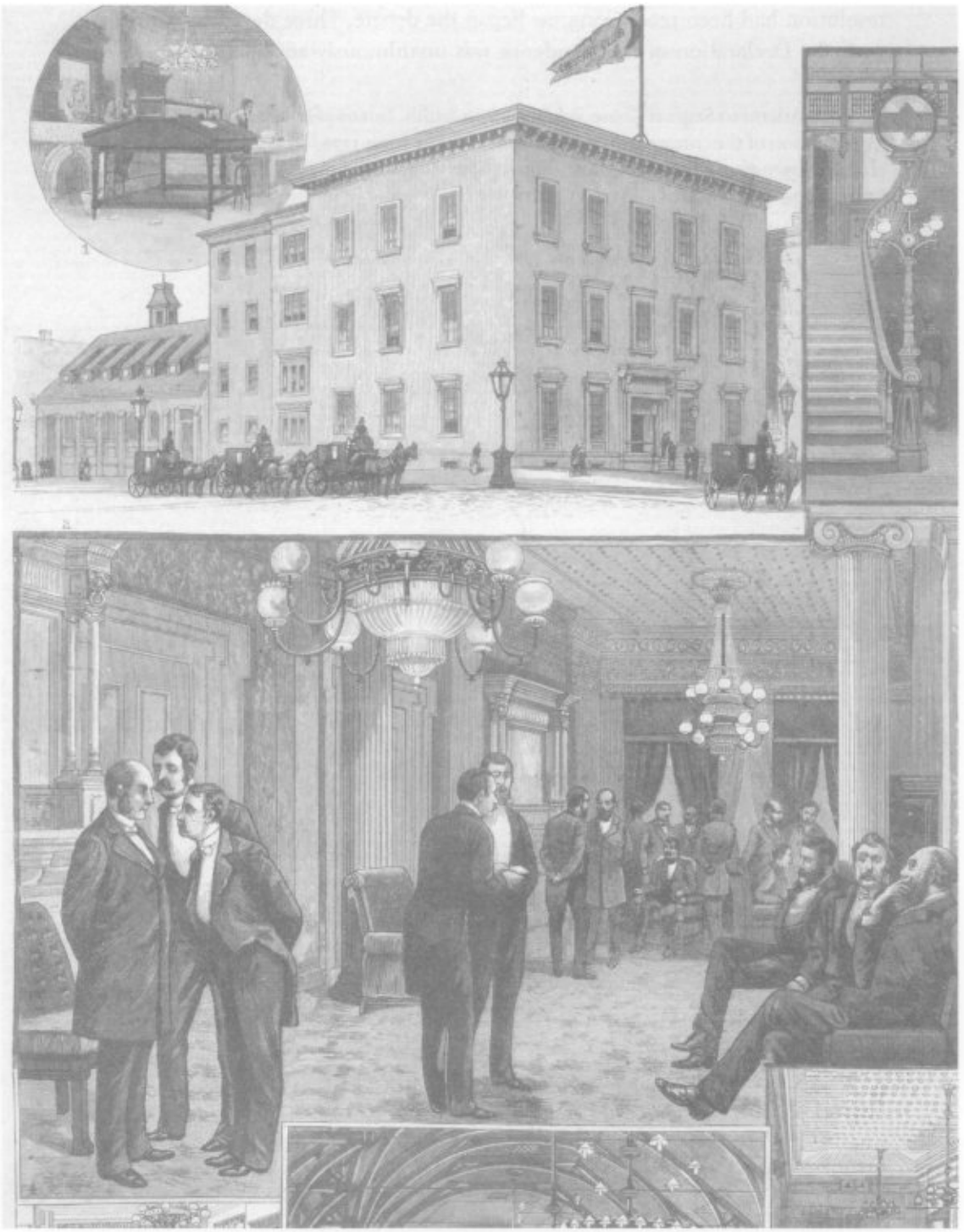
the agitation from Baltimore, county voters ordered their convention representatives to overturn the previous prohibitions to Maryland's delegates in Congress. Samuel Chase left Philadelphia on June 14 in order to be present in Annapolis, along with Charles Carroll of Carrollton, for the debate on independence. Carroll of Carrollton, not yet elected to Congress, was working as an advisor to the Maryland delegates. Like Chase, Carroll was a member of the Provincial Convention and a proponent of independence. In Annapolis, as the convention got underway, Chase answered John Adams's letter with a note of assurance. "A general dissatisfaction prevails here with our Convention." The intense campaign promoting independence, which Chase and Carroll of Carrollton vigorously assisted, had broken the iron grip of the pro-British leaders. Included with Chase's note was a newspaper showing the text of new orders from Frederick County to its convention delegates. "Read the paper, and be assured Frederick speaks the sense of many counties," Chase told Adams. The new orders, adopted by voters at a public meeting June 17, reveal explosive resentment over the convention's previous mandates. "Resolved Unanimously that what may be recommended by a majority of the Congress . . . we will, at the hazard of our lives and fortunes, support and maintain; and that every Resolution of Convention, tending to separate this Province from a majority of the colonies, without the consent of the people, is destructive to our internal safety, and big with public ruin." Chase and Carroll of Carrollton had added their considerable influence to the campaign to overturn the convention's prohibitions. They had written letters that were circulated in the counties, and after arriving in Annapolis they had lobbied convention delegates. "I have not been idle," Chase told Adams. "I have appealed in writing to the people. County after county is instructing."[57]

By Monday, July 1, Maryland's isolation was a policy of the past, as a resolution from the Provincial Convention was laid before the Continental Congress. Approved on Friday in Annapolis, the resolution had been entrusted to a courier for the long ride to Philadelphia. "It was brought into Congress this morning, just as we were entering on the great debate," John Adams wrote to Samuel Chase later that day. Complying with the orders pouring into Annapolis from the counties, the convention unanimously rescinded previous instructions. Maryland's delegates were "authorized and empowered to concur with the other United Colonies . . . in declaring the United Colonies free and independent States." When the

57. Haw, *Stormy Patriot*, 66–68; Ronald Hoffman, Sally D. Mason, *Princes of Ireland, Planters of Maryland: A Carroll Saga, 1500–1782* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 301, 307; Samuel Chase to John Adams, June 21, 1776, in Smith, *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, 4:305, note 1; "Resolution, in Committee for the Lower District of Frederick County," June 17, 1776, *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette; or, The Baltimore General Advertiser*, June 25, 1776.

resolution had been read, Congress began the debate. Three days later, on July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was unanimously adopted.[58]

58. John Adams to Samuel Chase, July 1, 1776, in Smith, *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, 4:348; "A resolution of the convention of Maryland, of the 28 June, 1776," in Worthington C. Ford, et al., eds., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904–37), 5:504.



The Crescent Club, 1886, home of Baltimore City's conservative Democrats. (Frank Leslie's Illustrated News, *December 11, 1886.*)

Power Networks: The Political and Professional Career of Baltimore Boss J. Frank Morrison

TRACY MATTHEW MELTON

Henry Louis Mencken's oldest memory, his first permanently etched awareness "of the cosmos we all infest," was "a great burst of lights, some of them red and others green, but most of them only the bright yellow of flaring gas." Fireworks, Chinese lanterns, and shaded gas lamps produced the reds and greens. Paraded torches, gasoline lamps carried by "colored men," and the city's fixed gas lamps made the yellows. They shone for a night along Baltimore Street, outside the cigar factory of three-year-old Mencken's father during a carnival of the Order of Orioles. The brief description of the flowing river of lights, as viewed by his little-boy eyes from his mother's lap on their second-story factory-window perch, opens *Happy Days*, the writer's nostalgic story of his Baltimore youth. The choice to begin the narrative with this personally momentous event was not only a means of establishing Mencken's youthful self as a close observer of his surroundings but also of suggesting the lost nature of his boyhood world.[1]

The reference to the flaring gas lamps placed the carnival in the foreign, pre-electric past. In fact, the carnival, precisely dated by Mencken to September 13, 1883, occurred only three years after electric lights first appeared locally and a little more than a year after the first public arc lights, powered by rudimentary and temperamental dynamos, began to burn along a small number of streets in the city. Some of these electric lights, as well as calcium lights mounted on the telegraph poles, provided additional illumination for the revelers, but the boundaries of the developing electric networks were still very limited. According to one witness, "It was not an electric light parade at all, but a fine torchlight procession."[2]

More than five decades later, when Mencken typed out his own story, his beloved city was connected to a regional electrical generation and distribution network. Incandescent lights shone along the streets and in thousands of buildings. Electric motors improved productivity in homes and factories. Electric street-

1. H. L. Mencken, *Happy Days: 1880–1892* (1940; reprint, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 3; *Baltimore Sun*, September 14–15, 1883. [Hereinafter referred to as *Sun*.]
2. *Sun*, September 14, 1883. Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634–1980* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 396–97.

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cars ran along the same streets where horse-cars had once carried young Mencken and his cousin Pauline to school. Electric power lines, as well as telephone lines, were strung from pole to pole across the city and into the countryside. Pollution from electricity generation scarred the land, dirtied the water, and fouled the air. Electric light had begun to blot out the heavens. The electrification of the city had wrought a greater physical transformation than any other development during the eventful years of Mencken's remembered life.[3]

The story of the emergence and early expansion of this electrical network is essential to the larger story of the physical transformation of the city during Mencken's lifetime. It is also deeply revealing of the structure of social relationships that shaped this transformation. The men constructing the electrical network operated within complex and constantly evolving personal networks that greatly influenced the direction and degree of success of their professional careers. Their personal networks were the natural product of a pervasive associational culture played out every day and every night in the city's homes, streets, shops, taverns, clubs, offices, and churches. Each network was a miniature, and component, of a larger citywide network of individuals connected by ties of family, friendship, partisanship, financial relationships, religion, and common interest. A glimpse of one of these networks provides a useful means of envisioning the nature of the larger structure. Perhaps the most illustrative personal network was that of James Frank Morrison, a significant figure in local politics—first as a lieutenant in the dominant Democratic Conservative organization then as an insider-turned-reformer and the chief rival to boss Isaac Freeman Rasin—and the engineer most responsible for the electrification of the city.[4]

Morrison was born in Saint John, New Brunswick, in April 1841. His family moved back and forth between New Brunswick and the United States several times before he permanently settled in the States when he was fifteen years old. He took a position in a business house in Boston but came to Baltimore to work in the telegraph department of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in 1862. Like many other telegraphers, he followed a nomadic life along the wires for several years, spending varying periods in Frederick, Maryland; Parkersburg, West Virginia; Washington, D.C; Louisville, Kentucky; and New York. He worked for the B&O and the Western Union Company with a brief stint as the telegraphic manager of the New York News Association. While in Maryland, he joined the Baltimore district of the National Telegraphic Union.[5]

3. Mencken, *Happy Days*, 19–20.

4. For accessible descriptions of the network theory that underlies this narrative, see Albert-László Barabási, *Linked: The New Science of Networks* (Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus Publishing, 2002) and Duncan J. Watts, *Six Degrees: The Science of a Connected Age* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2003).

5. For Morrison's early life, see *Sun*, September 11, 1882; July 4, 1916, p. 12 (obituary). Informa-

Morrison's career in telegraphy gave him valuable business and technical experience. The B&O and the Western Union were two of the largest and most modern enterprises in the United States. His years with the Western Union closely coincided with the company's increasing dominance of telegraphic communication across the nation. The company was at the forefront of the managerial revolution transforming the national economy. His positions in the company's offices in Frederick, Louisville, Baltimore, Washington, and New York provided profitable vantage points from which to witness this revolution. They gave him a solid business education.[6]

Western Union was no less at the forefront of a technological revolution. Samuel F. B. Morse transmitted his famous message, "What hath God wrought!" from Washington to Baltimore in May 1844, only eighteen years before Morrison began his career in telegraphy. A telegrapher sent the first transcontinental message, from the Chief Justice of California to President Abraham Lincoln affirming the state's loyalty to the Union, in October 1861, just months before he began. During the intervening years, telegraph companies had strung tens of thousands of miles of wire across the United States. Four years into his new career, Cyrus Field's crew aboard the *Great Eastern* laid the first successful transatlantic telegraphic cable. The cable connected the extensive American and European telegraphic networks. Rapid communication across a wide swath of the planet became possible.[7]

A key aspect of this technological revolution was its networked nature. The technology relied on relatively simple electric principles ingeniously applied. The principles were not fundamentally beyond those used in the developing electric industry's production of annunciators, burglar alarms, and medical devices. Both telegraphy and these small electrical devices relied on crude batteries that were difficult and expensive to maintain. What was fundamentally different was

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tion on his early career is available in *Telegrapher* I (15) November 1, 1865, p. 185; I (16) November 15, 1865, p. 193; III (48) March 15, 1867, p. 156; V (128) December 26, 1868, p. 142; VI (165) September 11, 1869, p. 17; VI (179) December 18, 1869, p. 131; VI (193) March 26, 1870, p. 247; VII (243) March 11, 1871, p. 227; VIII (304) May 11, 1872, p. 299; VIII (334) December 7, 1872, p. 539. For a good discussion of the lives of telegraphers during this period, see Paul Israel, *Edison: A Life of Invention* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998), chapter 2.

6. Robert Luther Thompson, *Wiring a Continent: The History of the Telegraph Industry in the United States 1832–1866* (1947; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1972); Edwin Gabler, *The American Telegrapher: A Social History, 1860–1900* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Kenneth Silverman, *Lightning Man: The Accursed Life of Samuel F. B. Morse* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003); John Steele Gordon, *A Thread Across the Ocean: The Heroic Story of the Transatlantic Cable* (New York: Walker Publishing Company, 2002; Perennial, 2003); Gillian Cookson, *The Cable: The Wire That Changed the World* (Gloucestershire, U.K.: Tempus Publishing Limited, 2003).

7. Silverman, *Lightning Man*, 404; Gordon, *A Thread*, 187–208; Cookson, *The Cable*, 131–56.

telegraphy's reliance on a network of stations to relay messages across vast distances. The networking of these stations greatly enhanced and multiplied the utility of the limited electric current generated by battery power and made the industry's vast scope possible. It also provided a useful model that engineers and inventors such as Morrison and Thomas Alva Edison, who also began his career as a telegrapher, could apply when the development of practical dynamos in the 1870s provided a sufficient source of electric current to power lighting systems.[8]

Morrison transferred from the Western Union office in Louisville to the company's office in Baltimore, where he became night chief operator in the spring of 1872 and quickly began to establish deep ties in the city. That fall the telegraphers in the office presented him and his bride, Irene C. Sifford of Frederick, with "a handsome silver tea set as a mark of their esteem and regard." He became active in the Democratic Conservative Party. He presided at a meeting of the Monumental Club. The club was one of the first Democratic Conservative ward clubs to gain prominence after the Civil War. Its pro-southern orientation, like that of the party more generally, was evident when it resolved on the death of defeated presidential candidate Horace Greeley shortly after the election of 1872, "That the course pursued by him in his efforts for universal amnesty and the entire reconciliation of the sections of our country commands the highest encomiums from us and all lovers of civil liberty and true government, and the lasting gratitude of all citizens who desire the prosperity and unity of the nation."[9]

Morrison's regular meetings with a handful of other politicians from the western side of the city led to the formation of the Crescent Club in March 1874. Morrison became the first president of the club, an office that he would hold for almost seventeen years. The club became the home of Democratic Conservatives in the Fourteenth Ward. Its success gave Morrison and the other leading members influence in the ward and in the citywide party organization. This influence was evident in Governor William Pinkney Whyte's appointment of Morrison as the voting registrar for the Fourteenth Ward and his subsequent election as president of the board of registers in early 1874. During a period when fraud and chicanery were rampant in the city's elections, the party chose only loyal men who, at least, were able to manipulate the registration process for partisan advantage. The lists of registrars, like all local patronage lists, were a "Who's Who" of the most important ward politicians in the city.[10]

8. For the use of electric medical devices in this period, see Linda Simon, *Dark Light: Electricity and Anxiety from the Telegraph to the X-Ray* (San Diego: Harcourt, Inc., 2004).

9. *Telegrapher* VIII (304) May 11, 1872, p. 299; VIII (334) December 7, 1872, p. 539; *Sun*, August 8, 1872; December 9, 1872; October 31, 1873.

10. *Sun*, February 24, 1885; December 14, 1886; March 5, 1887; July 13, 1889; March 4, 1902, p. 12; March 5, 1902, p. 12; *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*, December 11, 1886, p. 261. Several Crescents also had close business ties to Morrison. This group included D. Howard Tuxworth,

A saloon stabbing in the fall of 1875 incapacitated Morrison and forced him to resign the position. Morrison exchanged words with a couple of other men in a saloon. All were active in local politics. One, Thomas Bond, the proprietor of the Charleston House, struggled briefly with Morrison. Sketchy newspaper accounts suggest that Morrison, "a large and strong looking young man," bullied the smaller Bond. They separated briefly but came together again. Bond drew a knife and cut Morrison just above the navel and in the ribs and inflicted defense wounds across his right arm, causing a large loss of blood. Two days later, one newspaper reported that Morrison was "very well known in the city and his house was visited by a number of persons yesterday, but few saw him, as the physicians deemed it necessary to his recovery that he be kept as quiet as possible." His condition improved over the next few weeks.[11]

The stabbing was not an unusual affair. Although the political assassinations and large-scale election-day confrontations of the 1850s had greatly diminished, the city's politics remained bloody. Politicians still confronted one another on the street and in restaurants and saloons. Alcohol was frequently at hand. Personal honor was still something that was defended with violence. Numerous partisans beat, stabbed, and shot their rivals.

In the months following his recovery, Morrison's political and professional standing rose sharply. He received a patronage position as a committee clerk in the Maryland State Senate for the 1876 legislative session. He had left the Western Union to work as a reporter for the *Gazette*, a Democratic Conservative newspaper, but returned to his old field when Mayor Ferdinand Latrobe appointed him as the superintendent of the Baltimore Police and Fire Alarm Telegraph. The city's telegraphic network was almost two decades old, and there were demands for an updated system. Morrison traveled to Philadelphia, New York, and Boston during the summer of 1876 to examine the police and fire alarm telegraphs. The trip further extended Morrison's contacts within the industry.[12]

Over the next sixteen months, Morrison supervised the construction of the new telegraphic network. On his advice, Gamewell & Company received a large contract to supply the equipment for the new network. Gamewell dominated the market for police and fire alarm telegraphs, and numerous U.S. and Canadian cities used its equipment. The company's bid was higher than other bids and exactly matched the amount appropriated by the ordinance directing the construction of a new network, suggesting that Morrison had mustered political support for the contract in exchange for some consideration. Like the political vio-

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Alfred J. Carr, Charles M. Armstrong, Thomas W. Johnson, Henry E. Rinehard, and David E. Evans.

11. *Sun*, October 4, 5, 11, 1875; January 28–31, 1876.

12. *Sun*, March 7, 1876; May 18, 1876; July 28, 1876; July 4, 1916, p. 12 (obituary).

lence, such a transaction was not unusual. Favoritism, kickbacks, and graft were intrinsic to American—and certainly Baltimore—politics during this period.[13]

The new police and fire alarm telegraph went into operation in December 1877. According to reports, the network included 150 boxes connected by 170 miles of wire strung from more than two thousand chestnut poles. It relied on "automatic repeaters, dial repeaters, keys, and all the paraphernalia of a first class equipment." The hub of the network was the City Hall where the office of the telegraph was located. Fifty-nine separate lines ran into the offices there. Five miles of wire ran through the building. There were nine hundred battery cells in the basement. Lines to the water supply facilities constructed under Morrison's supervision also connected to the City Hall.[14]

Following the completion of the new network, Morrison resigned his position as superintendent of the telegraph but accepted several other positions from his political friends. He served for a short time as the chief clerk at the state tobacco warehouse, as the superintendent of Maryland telegraphs, and as a member of the Baltimore board of fire commissioners. As state superintendent, he built telegraph lines out to the House of Correction and from the state prison to police headquarters. In the same position, he gained some notoriety for the construction of the first long-distance telephone system.[15]

Flooding badly damaged the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal in November 1877. The canal's board, under the leadership of C&O president Arthur Pue Gorman, who was on the verge of taking control of the Democratic Party in Maryland, directed Morrison to make "a complete survey of the Chesapeake + Ohio Canal, for the purpose of Constructing a Telegraph line and establishing stations at proper points for the transaction of the Company's business and to expedite the making of repairs when necessary." During the course of planning and construction, rapid advances in telephone technology created an opportunity for the C&O to set up a system that promised lower operating costs. According to Morrison, "The original plan for a Telegraph line was abandoned because of the cost of skilled Telegraph operators."[16]

13. For the construction of the system, see *Sun*, July 28, 1876; October 16, 1876; April 11, 1877; November 10, 17, 20, 1877; December 3, 1877; January 10, 1878; *Telegrapher* XII (546) December 30, 1876. On the Gamewell Company, see the same volume of the *Telegrapher* and the *Journal of the Telegraph* V (103) February 15, 1872, p. 69. Morrison was later identified as a paid agent for Gamewell and was implicated in a scandal involving overpayment for equipment supplied to the city's fire department. See *Sun*, July 19, 20, 24, 1883; August 1–4, 14–15, 27–31, 1883; December 12, 1883; January 15, 1884; February 12, 1884; March 13–27, 1884.

14. *Telegrapher* XII (546) December 30, 1876; *Sun*, November 20, 1877.

15. *Sun*, May 11, 1878; June 3, 1878; July 19, 1878; October 3, 5, 1878; March 3, 1880.

16. Report of James Frank Morrison, November 1, 1879, pp. 94–97, Proceedings of the President and Directors, 1847–1890, vol. N, Record Group 79, Records of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, National Archives, College Park, Maryland (NARA). Letters providing in-

Morrison oversaw the construction of the C&O telephone line during the middle months of 1879. In March he inspected poles previously erected for abandoned projects and found that they were too light for his purposes. He "also found that the dense growth of timber along the canal necessitated the employment of gangs of men, other than those engaged in construction, to open the way for the building of the line." On May 12 his construction gangs began work along the canal. The poles were "set in driven clay and every precaution taken to prevent them caving in on curves. White oak brackets fastened to the poles with six inch spikes support the glass insulators upon which the live wire is securely fastened with tie wire of its own gauge. . . . In many places the only foothold we could obtain for the poles was by drilling into the solid rock." Despite the hard terrain and the oppressive summer heat, construction progressed steadily, and Morrison's gangs completed the telephone line in October.[17]

The line stretched from Georgetown to Cumberland, a distance of more than 180 miles. The telephones were set up in the watch boxes and lockkeepers' houses. The installed equipment included forty-eight "Edison universal telephones" and four hundred "Calland gravity batteries." Almost half of the batteries were placed in the thirty-eight stations along the line. Most of the rest were concentrated at the ends of the line and at switches at Dam No. 6, Dam No. 4, and Wood's Lock. Morrison reported, "All the materials, and all the work, is of the very best description, and all the appliances which modern science has furnished has been applied to make the service as nearly perfect as possible."[18]

C&O president Gorman remained in close contact with Morrison during the project. He questioned his superintendent on the costs of equipment and sought information on the instructions given to the C&O men who had charge of the telephones. He directed Morrison to ensure that, with a few exceptions, they were only used by the company's men. On completion he expressed complete satisfaction with Morrison's performance. "I desire to express to you my great appreciation of the manner in which you have discharged the duties of your office in having constructed for the Company such a magnificent line of telephone, so thoroughly equipped and in such fine working order," Gorman wrote. "The energy displayed and the intelligent appreciation of what was required could not have been excelled by any man." The financial difficulties of the company, however, prevented it from paying Morrison an adequate salary, and his connection with the canal ended in the summer of 1880.[19]

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formation on the construction of the telephone line are in Letters Received by the Office of the President and Directors, 1873–1880 (Entry 191), and Letters Sent by the Office of the President and Directors, 1879–1881 (Entry 196), in the same record group.

17. Report of James Frank Morrison, November 1, 1879, pp. 94–97, NARA.

18. Ibid.; *Washington Post*, August 27, 1879.

19. Letters from Arthur Pue Gorman to James Frank Morrison, May 30, 1879 (#119); Septem-

By that time, Morrison had already turned his focus from the canal to the city. He remained a city fire commissioner, and in March the board of visitors of the Baltimore city jail bestowed upon him one of the plum positions in city government by choosing him as the new warden. The job paid a high salary and provided a residence on Madison Street. It also offered large patronage opportunities. Among the deputy wardens were many of the most active Democratic Conservative partisans. The appointment required the support of the city's leadership and the blessing of state leader Gorman, whom the state legislature had only weeks before elected to the United States Senate, and provided further evidence of Morrison's influence within party ranks.[20]

Warden Morrison quickly transformed the jail. The appearance of the building and grounds improved. According to one newspaper, "The walls of the interior have been freshly whitecoated, the different departments isolated from each other, the cells are kept scrupulously clean, and there is no prison odor about the place." The new warden's interest in electricity was evident in his plans to apply electricity to the gas lighting so that the lights could be turned on and off instantly. The arrangements for meals changed. Prisoners began to eat at common tables rather than in their cells. The food was "ample, but not too tempting." Morrison placed a greater emphasis on discipline. New rules barred banter between prisoners and guards and made attendance at Sunday religious services mandatory. New workshops opened. Morrison intended "to make the jail a busy place, and in that respect especially uncongenial to the idle and viciously disposed."[21]

Morrison turned up frequently at political meetings and party conventions and other public affairs. He was a delegate to the Democratic Conservative judicial convention that renominated Isaac Freeman Rasin for a third term as clerk at the Court of Common Pleas. He helped to host a bay excursion given by the Baltimore telegraphic fraternity and joined the German-American Democratic Organization for the celebration of its second anniversary. Like other party leaders, he spent a good portion of the early months of even-numbered years lobbying the state legislature in Annapolis. Many of the delegates and state senators from the city, especially those from the western side, owed their election, or at least

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ber 17, 1879 (#205); April 23, 1880 (#300); July 15, 1880 (#345), Letters Sent by the Office of the President and Directors, 1879–1881 (Entry 196), NARA.

20. *Sun*, March 3 and April 7–8, 1880. In the years following Morrison's election, if not at the time, several members of the board of visitors had close political and business relationships with him. Adolph Nachman was an active member of the Crescent Club. Henry Rinehard [Reinhard] was a member of the executive committee of the club and one of first directors of the Brush Company. Otis Keilholtz's son Pierre, an engineer trained at the Naval Academy, later was general manager of the United Electric Light and Power Company, the successor to the Brush Company. Otis's service as Speaker of the House of Delegates at its next session (1882) was an indication of his political prominence.

21. *Sun*, April 8, 1880; June 2, 1880.

some of their success, to him. Other party bosses, such as Gorman, Rasin, and William Pinkney Whyte understood that he was a leader with a large enough following to be recognized and consulted in important city and state matters.[22]

Morrison was always looking to get ahead, and an opportunity to participate in the newly emerging, and potentially lucrative, electric light industry attracted him. While he was busy rebuilding the public telegraphic network in Baltimore and constructing the telephone line from Georgetown to Cumberland, several inventors had been working to develop commercial electric lighting systems. Charles F. Brush, a young Cleveland chemist with a strong interest in electricity, solved several technical problems that had hindered the practical application of arc lighting. This method relied on a current generated by a dynamo to produce light "from an electric arc formed by current between the ends of two pencil-like pieces of carbon." The resulting light was intensely brilliant and only suitable for outside lighting or very large interior spaces.[23]

Brush's arc lighting equipment gained widespread attention when his dynamo fared well in a competition sponsored by the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia in 1877, and his arc lights impressed the crowds at the Mechanics Fair in Boston the following year. Brush sold dynamos and arc lights to Philadelphia department store owner John Wanamaker and the Continental Clothing House of Boston. He sold the equipment for the first electric central station to a San Francisco light company, and it began to provide light to a handful of customers during the summer of 1879. By the end of the next year, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and other United States cities had Brush arc lighting stations. To finance them, Brush and his business partners granted a license to local arc-lighting companies to use, sell, or rent the patented Brush equipment. In exchange, the local company granted a large minority of its stock to the parent company.[24]

The Brush Electric Light Company of Baltimore City incorporated with a stated capital of $200,000 in April 1881. The company reportedly planned to "manufacture electricity for illuminating and for all other purposes to which electricity or magnetism may be applied." Commission merchants were prominent among the ten incorporators. Summerfield Baldwin was one of the most active men behind the formation of the company and its president for several years. Baldwin had come to the city from Anne Arundel County in September 1849 to take a position in a wholesale dry goods store that had been arranged by his brother, a partner in Woodward, Baldwin & Co. He left the store to form a partnership with his brother's bookkeeper. The two firms later merged to form

22. *Sun*, June 18 and July 22, 1879; May 12, 1881; January 14, 18, 1882.

23. Harold C. Passer, *The Electrical Manufacturers 1875–1900: A Study in Competition, Entrepreneurship, Technical Change, and Economic Growth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 11.

24. Ibid., 14–21.

Woodward, Baldwin & Norris, which pioneered the development of the southern textile industry. He was a devout Methodist whose faith drove his personal acquisitiveness and palpably encouraged an active involvement in political and moral reformism. He ran for governor on the Prohibition Party ticket in 1887 and later served as an officer in the Society for the Suppression of Vice. He was a model of Methodist rectitude.[25]

Most of the other incorporators were part of the same business and social networks. Charles D. Fisher, Edmund D. Bigelow, and George H. Baer were commission and shipping merchants. William T. Levering and Jacob B. Waidner were in the coffee trade and Oliver C. Zell the fertilizer trade. Their collective participation in the formation of the local Brush Company clearly illustrates how the wealth generated from the city's trade financed its industrial development.[26]

The incorporators tapped Morrison to manage the operations of the company. The electric industry in the city remained extremely small, and only a few local men had strong backgrounds in the developing technologies. Morrison, of course, had extensive experience building telegraphic networks and had recently opened a telegraphic supply store on South Street. Augustus G. Davis, formerly superintendent of the Baltimore & Ohio telegraph lines, had patented an improved galvanic "Baltimore battery," battery insulator, and telegraph key, which he sold through Watts & Co., later Davis & Watts, an "Electrical Instrument Manufactory and General Telegraphic Supply Store" at No. 47 Holliday Street. But Davis had turned his attention to the telephone industry. Davis & Watts had operated as an agent for the Bell Company, and Davis was the president of the Maryland Telephone Company.[27]

Augustus Hahl ran the only other significant electrical shop in Baltimore. Hahl was a German immigrant from Württemberg, who had moved to the city

25. *Sun*, April 18, 1881; J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Baltimore City and County* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), 502; Summerfield Baldwin, *Summerfield Baldwin: His Autobiography—His Ancestry—With Editorial and Newspaper Comments* (Baltimore: Norman T. A. Munder & Co., 1925), 9–19; Mary Baldwin Baer and John Wilbur Baer, *A History of Woodward, Baldwin & Co.* (Baltimore: Garamond/Pridemark Press, 1977), 5–39; *Sun*, January 21, 1898; February 22, 1924, p. 22 (obituary).

26. *Woods's Baltimore City Directory 1881* (Baltimore: John W. Woods, 1881). For example, Dr. William Whitridge, another incorporator, and Eugene Levering, brother and business partner of William, were organizers of the Protestant Infant Asylum in 1875. Eugene Levering and William T. Dixon and Thomas Deford, who were both later associated with the Brush Company, were among the original officers of the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association, established in September 1880. Eugene Levering and Summerfield Baldwin later served together as treasurer and president of the Society for the Prevention of Vice. See Scharf, *History of Baltimore*, 448, 598; *Sun*, January 21, 1898. Joshua Levering, brother of William and Eugene, chaired the Prohibition Party convention that nominated Baldwin for governor and served as the party's presidential candidate in 1896.

27. Augustus G. Davis held United States Patents #129,465 (July 16, 1872); #130,793 (August 27,

from Washington where he had manufactured electrical clocks and bells and equipment for the U.S. Signals Service, in partnership with his step-cousin Ottmar Mergenthaler. Their technical training came from Augustus's father Louis, a clockmaker in Württemberg. Hahl held patents for an electro-magnetic signaling apparatus and electric indicators for elevators. Although the cousins tinkered with electrical devices, Hahl remained primarily a clockmaker and Mergenthaler increasingly concentrated on improvements in printing technology. Mergenthaler's invention of the Linotype a few years later revolutionized the printing trade. The small number of electricians in the city was evidence of the embryonic state of the electric industry in the spring of 1881, but their backgrounds in European skilled craftsmanship and American telegraphy were a clear indication of the nature of the technical knowledge possessed by its founders.[28]

Morrison, though, brought to the enterprise more than technical expertise. He also brought political influence. The Crescent Club was the most important political club on the west side of the city, and his business and political connections on the east side were becoming increasingly apparent. The fire department, paid and professionalized but still subject to political manipulation, reportedly supported Morrison's interests. One Democratic rival claimed that Morrison's friends removed his clerk at a primary election and replaced him with one of Morrison's firemen. A removed fireman who was suing the city for back salary testified that he and Morrison had argued about the political loyalties of No. 13

1872); and #134,364 (December 31, 1872). Davis & Watts later operated as the Viaduct Manufacturing Company. On Davis, see *Telegrapher* VI (179) December 18, 1869, p. 130; *Woods's Baltimore City Directory 1881*. On Davis & Watts, see *Telegrapher* IX (338) January 4, 1873, p. 5; *Journal of the Telegraph* VI (whole no. 135) June 16, 1873, p. 217; VII (whole no. 148) January 1, 1874, pp. 11–12; VIII (whole no. 172) January 1, 1875, p. 12; *The Electrical World* VI (4) July 25, 1885, p. ii; Letter from Davis & Watts to W. E. Porter, March 14, 1878 (#2458), Letters Received by the Office of the President and Directors, 1873–1880 (Entry 191), NARA; Rosario Joseph Tosiello, *The Birth and Early Years of the Bell Telephone System 1876–1880*, Small Business Enterprise in America (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 100, 132; Robert W. Garnet, *The Telephone Enterprise: The Evolution of the Bell System's Horizontal Structure, 1876–1909*, The Johns Hopkins/AT&T Series in Telephone History (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 17; Kenneth Lipartito, *The Bell System and Regional Business: The Telephone in the South, 1877–1920*, The Johns Hopkins/AT&T Series in Telephone History (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 45–47, 97, 236n39, 245n21; Brugger, *Middle Temperament*, 396.

28. Augustus Hahl held United States Patents #112,242 (February 28, 1871) and #148,447 (March 10, 1874). Hahl also held patents with Mergenthaler and later patented a pneumatic clock. He moved his operations to Chicago in the 1880s. Both men received the prestigious John Scott Award, Mergenthaler for the linotype in 1891 and Hahl for an improved pneumatic clock in 1901. See Basil Kahan, *Ottmar Mergenthaler: The Man and his Machine, A Biographical Appreciation of the Inventor on His Centennial* (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 2000), 5–12; Carl Schlesinger, ed., *The Biography of Ottmar Mergenthaler Inventor of the Linotype*, Oak Knoll Series on the History of the Book (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 1989, 1992), 3–11.

Company. The commissioner allegedly told the fireman, "I have the power and will use it." The city's newspapers were soon referring to "the Morrison influence," "the Morrison element," and "the Morrison wing" of the Democratic Party. This political influence was vital to a fledgling company whose prospects depended largely on winning a contract to light the public streets.[29]

In March 1882, almost a year after the incorporation of the local Brush Company, a bill to contract with the company to light specified streets at seventy cents per arc lamp per night for five years was introduced in the city council. The United States Electric Light Company and the Sheridan Electric Light Company, both of whom were also attempting to establish themselves in the city and had important supporters in the council, protested the measure. The contract promised a steady stream of revenue and offered an opportunity to lower costs because lines to private customers could be connected to the public lines. It gave the Brush Company a huge advantage in the scramble to gain control of the local market. The Brush bill passed both branches.[30]

To reform-minded opponents, it seemed another example of a private plundering of the public purse. Newspaper editorials criticized it on several grounds, most significantly because it bound the city to the rate for an extended period and gave municipal officials the authority to set the number of lights and to extend the territory covered by the bill. The *Sun* noted that it was "well understood that many electricians are still busily engaged in the effort to perfect the processes and to cheapen the cost of the light." Edison, the world's most famous electrician, was building the Pearl Street station in New York, the first central station designed to power an incandescent lighting system.[31]

Opponents attacked the character of the Brush bill's proponents. One denounced the city council for acting "arbitrarily" by "turning a deaf ear to all who proposed competition or lower rates for the services desired." The men behind the bill had "been identified with bounty and printing scandals, with telegraph and practical wire-pulling above ground and under ground." One, stated the *Sun*, enjoyed "the reputation of being 'a majority' of the city council, as well as a director of the paramount body sometimes called the General Assembly of Maryland." It would have been apparent to local political observers that the telegraph and practical wire-puller was Morrison. On March 22, despite the opposition to the bill, Mayor William Pinkney Whyte signed it.[32]

29. *Sun*, September 20, 21, 26, 1882; May 27, 1884.

30. *Sun*, March 14, 1882. The protest of the United States Company indicated that both it and the Brush Company were providing electric lighting to customers by this time. On the United States Company, see Brugger, *Middle Temperament*, 396.

31. *Sun*, March 14–20, 1882. On Edison, see Passer, *Electrical Manufacturers*, 78–104; Israel, *Edison*, 191–207; Jill Jonnes, *Empires of Light: Edison, Tesla, Westinghouse, and the Race to Electrify the World* (New York: Random House, 2003), 76–85.

32. *Sun*, March 15, 1882.

The Brush Company began to erect electric arc lamps on the city's streets. By September, the same month Edison's Pearl Street station started operations, the company was lighting more than two hundred lamps for the city and approximately one hundred more for private customers. At the company's small works on Monument Street, near the penitentiary and jail grounds and very close to Morrison's residence, it put in three engines to run its dynamos, the smallest of 125-horsepower, and planned to add two 250-horsepower engines. It purchased a custom-made Poole & Hunt line-shaft and Frisbie friction-clutch pulleys to transfer the power output of the engines to the dynamos. The engines burned three and a half pounds of "trash," a mixture of three or four parts anthracite coal screenings and one part soft bituminous coal, per horsepower per hour. The engines simultaneously powered the shiny white lights that transformed the look of the streets and contributed to the accumulation of black soot across the urban landscape.[33]

Brush president Baldwin and general manager Morrison actively managed the construction and operation of the company's network. During construction, Baldwin visited the central station owned by the Philadelphia Company to examine how its engineers had set up operations. He found that they "had attached a forty-five horse-power Porter & Allen engine to each machine, and the engine was running like the sheriff was after it." The examination convinced him that larger engines improved the efficiency of large electric light networks. Morrison worked diligently to solve defects that the company found in the operation of the expensive Poole & Hunt line-shaft and Frisbie clutches, and ultimately decided to abandon them. The experience taught him "that the safe and economical plan, that which saves your belting, saves your machinery, gives you a cool shaft, lets you sleep at night when you go home, is the old-fashioned tight and loose pulley." He experimented with underground wiring and tested with his "own hand" the "Rittenhouse plan" and a wire insulated with kerite in the jail yard. He oversaw the company's entry into incandescent lighting. While working on the construction of the Brush network, he built a fire-alarm telegraph for the Baltimore County fire department. Morrison was always an electrical engineer at heart.[34]

That same fall "one of the really epoch-making political battles of Baltimore" altered the direction of Morrison's political career. A still inchoate reform movement, coupled with a complex pattern of political rivalries within the state and local Democratic Party, generated a "New Judges" ticket aimed at defeating the

33. *Sun*, July 8, 17, 1882; September 5, 21, 1882; *Proceedings of the National Electric Light Association at its First Annual Convention, Feb., 1885, Held at Chicago, Ill., and at Its Semi-Annual Convention, August, 1885, Held at New York City* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Publishing Company, 1886), 52–53, 55–57, 150–51; *Proceedings of the National Electric Light Association at the Second Annual Convention, February 1886, Held at Baltimore* (Baltimore: The Baltimore Publishing Company, 1886), 71–73, 81–83.

34. *Proceedings of the National Electric Light Association*, 53, 56; *Proceedings NELA at the Second Annual Convention, February 1886, Held at Baltimore* (Baltimore: The Baltimore

reelection of three judges in the city courts. Reformers wished to strike at bossism and to take the local judiciary out of politics. Rival Democrats wanted to crush the political influence of Mayor Whyte, the politician most clearly identified with the "Old Judges" ticket and the brother of Campbell W. Pinkney, one the incumbents. Morrison challenged Whyte and the regular party organization in several wards during the primaries. Several of the men associated with the Brush Company, and members of their families, led the New Judges fight, giving Morrison important business and personal connections within reform circles. On the day of the election, the New Judges won a large victory in Morrison's Fourteenth Ward and across the city.[35]

Mayor Whyte quickly retaliated. The following winter, he orchestrated a reorganization of the city jail's board of visitors and replaced the fire commissioners with a fire marshal—J. Monroe Heiskell, his personal secretary. Five months after taking office, Heiskell charged Morrison and Samuel Regester, another one of the ousted commissioners and also a bolter during the fall campaign, with intentionally overestimating the amount of equipment that the department required and then paying inflated prices for it to their business partners and friends. He specifically alleged the commissioners had made illegal contracts with D. Howard Tuxworth and C. G. Wescott for battery zincs and other electrical supplies and services and with J. Regester & Company, a family firm that included commissioner Regester. Tuxworth was Morrison's partner in the Southern Electric Company, an electric supply shop with a department for experimental work and models and a foundry for brass and zinc castings operated in loose connection with the Brush Company. He was an active Democrat in the Fifth Ward and may have met Morrison at a party convention or in Old Town, near the warden's house, where he kept a grocery store. Wescott was an old friend from Morrison's days as a telegrapher in Parkersburg, who had reportedly been set up as a business front for his electric deals in Baltimore. Heiskell also claimed that Morrison had attempted to use his influence to have the department pay for useless alarm indicators purchased from the Gamewell Company. Morrison was one of its agents.[36]

The retaliation backfired when a grand jury presented all of the members of

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Publishing Co., 1886), 123–24; Nicholas B. Wainwright, *History of the Philadelphia Electric Company* 1881–1961 (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Electric Company, 1961), 18; *Sun*, August 24–25, 1882.

35. Frank Richardson Kent, *The Story of Maryland Politics* (Baltimore: Thomas and Evans Printers, 1911), 104. Leading reformers included members of the Baldwin and Deford families. Brush president Baldwin soon emerged as one of the leading political reformers in the city. For Morrison's activities and for the leaders in the New Judges fight, see *Sun*, September 20–21, and October 11, 14, 19, 1882; July 25, 1883.

36. *Sun*, July 19, 20, 24, 1883; August 1–4, 14–15, 27–31, 1883; December 12, 1883; January 15, 1884; February 12, 1884; March 13–27, 1884; *New York Times*, August 1, 1883.

the board of fire commissioners, including Mayor Whyte, president *ex officio* of the board. The legal action, and the possibility of an indictment, not only threatened to force Morrison to resign as warden of the city jail but also Whyte, one of the most respected figures in the state, a former governor and United States Senator and a lawyer with a national reputation, to resign as mayor. The entire affair became a grand embarrassment.[37]

The grand jury indicted the commissioners but declined to indict Whyte. The scandal and subsequent legal proceedings dragged on for more than a year. Although a jury eventually concluded that fraudulent intent had not been proven and acquitted Morrison, the facts strongly supported the charge that Morrison and Regester profited from their official positions. For Morrison, the most important consequence of the political developments from the New Judges fight to the elimination of his office was his falling out with the regular party organization, run not by Whyte in the mayor's office but Rasin at the clerk's office at the Court of Common Pleas. He thereby became an unlikely ally of the reform element in the city—a gruff and bullying party regular, a skilled insider once close to Gorman, Rasin, and Whyte, who had gained influence by putting together a large network of supporters held together by personal loyalties and patronage, suddenly finding common purpose with men like Summerfield Baldwin and John K. Cowen, who wanted to overthrow those same networks.[38]

Morrison concentrated his political efforts on remaking the Crescent Club. In April 1884, just weeks after his acquittal, the Crescents unveiled their new rooms on West Baltimore Street and began an aggressive campaign to expand the club's membership and enlarge its purpose. Political clubs in the city had a low reputation. Before the Civil War, clubs such as the Plug Uglies and Rip Raps were behind a significant spike in homicidal violence and the deepening of the city's reputation as "Mobtown." After the war they remained the neighborhood gathering places for the most unsavory elements of the regular party organizations. Their gathering places were drinking holes and gambling dens. Morrison and his club mates wanted the Crescent Club to operate more as a political gentleman's club, as a debating society where good Democrats could come to share ideas. Of course, success meant political influence for Morrison and a means of overcoming Rasin and his network.[39]

The Crescents actively campaigned for the Democratic presidential ticket in 1884. They traveled to the Democratic National Convention in a palace coach "covered with decorations bearing the words 'Crescent Club of Baltimore,' and created considerable sensation in the towns and cities through which it passed."

37. *Sun*, August 14–15, 27, 30–31, 1883.
38. *Sun*, August 31 and December 12, 1883; January 15, February 12, and March 13–27, 1884.
39. *Sun*, April 17, 1884; *Civil-Service Reformer*, 1 (March 1885), 29.

They put up a banner for candidates Grover Cleveland and Thomas Hendricks on West Baltimore Street. In the weeks before the election, they organized a series of mass meetings for the ticket. Morrison claimed that the Crescent meetings were necessary because the state central committee, as well as the national committee, had failed to put together "a proper campaign." The statement was a knock at Senator Gorman, the national chairman and the state boss—and Rasin's very good political friend. Almost a week after the election, Morrison marshaled a large Crescent contingent, reportedly six hundred men with a full band and a large drum corps, at a parade to honor Cleveland and Hendricks. "The club wore dark clothes, black silk hats and Crescent Club badges. This was one of the strongest divisions in the line and marched well."[40]

The Crescent's success in the campaign prodded Rasin and his political associates to establish their own large club. Less than a month after the Cleveland and Hendricks parade, the Calumet Club organized on the east side of the city. From the earliest reports, Rasin's hand was evident, and the connection became absolutely apparent over its twelve-year existence. The Calumets, like the Crescents, began to prepare for the inaugural parade in Washington in March. They intended their appearance there to serve as more than a means of honoring the Cleveland administration—it was to be a display of their political strength.[41]

The downtown ward clubs marched under the Calumet banner, and the uptown clubs rallied under the Crescents. One newspaper report observed, "Up town the Crescents rule the roost, and their marching corps includes companies of 52 officers and men, commencing with Company A and running half through the alphabet. The company drills are carried on in halls in different sections, and Mr. J. Frank Morrison is the chief marshal of the post." The enviable position in the parade line as the rearguard of the presidential party gained by the Calumets was a source of chagrin to the Crescents and a real indication of the influence that Gorman, Rasin, and the Calumet Club would have with the new administration.[42]

The Crescent and Calumet clubhouses became rival field headquarters for Morrison and Rasin as they struggled, together with Robert J. "Doc" Slater, proprietor of one of the grandest gambling houses in the country, for control of the Democratic organization in the city. Each corner in the triangular struggle attempted to make its headquarters into a visible representation of political clout. Slater's house on South Calvert Street was already a showplace. "The main saloon, to which the hall stairs conduct, occupies the entire front of the second

40. de Francias Folsom, *Our Police: A History of the Baltimore Force from the First Watchman to the Latest Appointee* (Baltimore: J. D. Ehlers & Co. and Guggenheimer, Weil Co., 1888), 132; *Sun*, July 21, September 3, October 25, and November 11, 1884.

41. *Sun*, December 6, 9, 1884; May 21, 1891; November 9, 1896; *New York Times*, November 10, 1896.

42. *Sun*, January 19–20, February 2–3, 11, 19, 27, and March 4–5, 1885.

story, and is about sixty feet long and thirty wide. It is gorgeously fitted up. A seamless dark blue velvet carpet, like that in the east room of the White House, covers the floor, over which are scattered articles of furniture of the most massive description." The Calumets bought a large house on East Baltimore Street and spent several thousand dollars turning it into an elegant clubhouse with pool and billiard tables and rooms for musical concerts. They hosted a public reception for the formal opening of the clubhouse on July 1, 1885. In the weeks following, the Crescents made arrangements to replace their clubhouse with something far more impressive. They decided to rebuild their present home on the southwest corner of Fayette and Paca Streets, just a few blocks south of Lexington market, at a cost initially estimated at $75,000.[43]

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper featured the new Crescent clubhouse the week of the formal opening in December 1886. The popular national publication described the Crescent Club as "one of the prominent political bodies of the country, and the leading one of the South." It pictured the interior and exterior of the building in nine separate drawings and provided a full account of its construction and furnishing. Just catching the early phases of outward urban expansion and inner decay, it noted, "The clubhouse occupies one of the most desirable and elegant locations in the city. It is a fine old residence that was not very long ago a centre of fashion." The structure was a two-story brownstone. On the first floor, a central hall divided a saloon-parlor that stretched the full depth of the house and two connected rooms that served as the reception rooms. On the second was a large club room. A new addition, resembling a small chapel, went up in the back yard. According to *Leslie's*, "The woodwork is dark cherry; the transoms of the vestibule are of cathedral stained glass; the carpet of blue Wilton. . . . It looks more like a pretty little church than anything else it can be compared to."[44]

The building "was brilliantly lighted with electricity." The electric lights were both an advertisement for Morrison's business interests and a visible expression of his professional and political accomplishments. They were not inexpensive. Morrison and Tuxworth billed the Crescent Building Society $8,000 for the electrical work. The amount was a large component of a total construction bill that reportedly approached $92,000. The "portly" Morrison presided at the palatial clubhouse like a prince at his court, reveling in the fine food and company and the sumptuous surroundings.[45]

43. The quotation describing Slater's house, first published in 1873, appears in Herbert Asbury, *Sucker's Progress: An Informal History of Gambling in America* (1938; reprint, New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2003), 408–9. On Slater, see *Sun*, May 4, 1902, p. 14 (obituary). On the Calumet clubhouse, see *Sun*, April 8, 21, May 14, 21, July 2, and December 12, 1885; November 9, 1896. On the Crescent, see *Sun*, July 22 and December 7, 1885; October 30 and November 13, 1886.

44. *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 11, 1886, p. 261.

45. *Sun*, November 13, and December 10, 14–16, 1886; December 5, 30, 1890; March 25, 1891.

The Crescents hosted numerous national political figures in their new home. Within months of the December 1886 opening, Senator Zebulon B. Vance of North Carolina and several congressmen from southern states made speeches at the club. The speakers, national figures and state and city politicians who appeared then and in subsequent years, generally spoke in favor of tariff reduction and political reform, including primary election laws, an annual registration of voters, and the Australian ballot. Some advocated home rule for Ireland. Henry George appeared at the club to promote his Single Tax theory, and Crescent members headed the local chapter of the Single Tax League. The national speakers who appeared before the Crescents reflected the general orientation of their club.[46]

Shortly after the opening of the clubhouse, the Crescents presented their president with an expensive emerald ring to show their appreciation for his leadership. The emerald weighed more than six carats and was reportedly "one of the largest and most perfect emeralds known to connoisseurs in the United States." Two diamonds, with a combined weight of more than five carats, framed the center stone. The enormous jewels were set on a gold band almost a quarter of an inch thick. More than seventy subscribers, including political friends and business associates, contributed a total of $3,600 for the ring.[47]

Despite their displays of power and prosperity, Morrison and Slater could not compete effectively with the political network Rasin constructed and managed. Morrison spent a great portion of his working hours minding his electric interests, and Slater had to protect his gambling interests from a wide range of threats. Slater's political rivals and moral reformers used the police and courts to harass him. At one point, the former convicted him and put him in the city jail. Rasin, on the other hand, was a full-time professional politician, who won his fame and fortune in that line of business. He did not spend days determining the most efficient means of transferring power from engines to dynamos. Nor did he spend days testing underground wires in the jail yard. He was always at his office, or at the Hotel Rennert, meeting with his political friends and associates, manipulating his network.

Rasin's control over state and local patronage—and his influence on federal patronage during the Cleveland administrations—broadened and strengthened the connections in his network. He could always rely on the backing of Senator Gorman and his state machine. A series of victories in the years following

46. *Sun*, January 29, February 5, 12, 19, March 19, April 2, and June 4, 1887; February 11, 1890. Jacob G. Schonfarber, an active member of the Knights of Labor and a friend of Morrison, was the first president of the Baltimore chapter of the Single Tax League.

47. *Sun*, March 15, 1887. Subscribers included D. Howard Tuxworth, Charles M. Armstrong, and David E. Evans, all partners or employees in Morrison's electrical businesses. They included P. A. O'Brien and James J. Flannery, officers at the NELA convention in Baltimore.

Cleveland's inauguration cemented his control over the Democratic Party in the city. By the time the new Crescent clubhouse opened in December 1886, Morrison's political standing was already on the wane. When the Crescents sold the building less than five years later to satisfy the club's debts, he remained a well-known ward politician and an important ally to the city's mushrooming reform movement but had no realistic expectations of overthrowing Rasin. During the same period, Morrison's business career followed a similar trajectory.[48]

Morrison had an interest in several electric businesses during the 1880s. He maintained his position as the general manager of the Brush Company and, with Tuxworth, continued to run the Southern Electric Company. He was one of the founders of the Baxter Electric Manufacturing and Motor Company. In 1886, Baxter Motor incorporated and began to set up shops for the production of electric motors developed by William Baxter Jr. During this stage of the development, inventors were working to build practical electric motors. Morrison had long been interested in the potential of electricity to drive machinery. He had purportedly built a flawed electric motor—it ran backwards—several years earlier. He probably had met Baxter the previous year at an electric convention, and the men agreed to form a partnership with the backing of Baltimore investors. The Brush Company opened a "day circuit" to provide electricity for the industrial application of the Baxter motors, including their use in the city's important textile industry. Morrison was also a director of the Annapolis Electric Light Company, which had a contract to light the state capital with incandescent lamps. His fellow directors included some of the most prominent men, and families, in Anne Arundel County.[49]

Morrison's professional career, like his political career, reached an apogee in the mid-1880s. He won election as president of the National Electric Light Association (NELA) at its first convention in Chicago in February 1885. NELA was an assemblage of electric arc lighting companies aimed at putting their industry on sounder footing. At its early meetings the executives from the member companies attempted to provide each other with information that would help them improve their operations—sharing what types of fuel they used, the arrangement of their boilers and engines, the best types of pulley systems to use. They discussed the problem of running electric and telephone wires together on the poles and the question of underground wires. Electric pioneers like Dr. Elisha Gray and Profes-

48. *Sun*, May 3, December 5, 13, 30, 1890; March 25, 1891.

49. *The Electrical World* VI (8) August 22, 1885, p. 78; R. L. Polk's Baltimore City Directory for 1888 (Baltimore: R. L. Polk, 1888); *Electric Power* I (6) June 1889, p. 149; I (10) October 1889, pp. 320–21; I (11) November 1889, p. 370; II (16) April 1890, p. 140; II (24) December 1890, p. 420; III (26) February 1891, pp. 51–52; *Sun*, September 25, 1886; December 5, 1888; October 10, 1889; December 21, 1889; January 30, 1890; Brugger, *Middle Temperament*, 396–97. On the Annapolis Company, see *Sun*, December 14, 1888.

sor Elihu Thomson and future industry leaders like Frank Sprague and Charles Van Depoele attended these initial meetings.[50]

The Baltimore electric men were prominent in the early years of the association. Morrison served as president of the association for the first three years of its existence. Summerfield Baldwin was the first treasurer, and Henry E. Rinehard, a director of the Brush Company in Baltimore and one of the members of the Board of Visitors of the city jail that had chosen Morrison as warden, was a vice president. David E. Evans, the superintendent of the Brush works on Monument Street, served on a committee appointed to recommend the best equipment for arc light central stations. Thomas McCoubray Jr. of the city was secretary in 1886. At the NELA convention in Baltimore that year, James J. Flannery and P. A. O'Brien, members of the Crescent Club and well known ward politicians on the west side, were assistant sergeants-at-arms. The NELA offices held by Morrison and his business partners and political friends were a demonstration of his standing in the developing electric industry.[51]

In 1887 the Brush Company's five-year contract to light the city's streets expired. Local gossip suggested that the Rasin forces would use the new contract to further erode Morrison's political influence. According to one report, he "was to have his last prop knocked from under him by the defeat of the electric light contracts, and those who are supposed to belong to his faction say it will be a dark day when the electric lights go out." Despite the threats, the Brush Company still held a strong position. It retained a great deal of political muscle, and it operated the only significant arc lighting system in the city. A law enacted by the previous legislature (1886) prevented companies not then in "practical operation" from running electric wires throughout the city without a special grant from the legislature and approval from the mayor and city council. Both political factions accepted a temporary truce, and the Brush Company entered an informal agreement with the city to light the streets for fifty cents per lamp per night.[52]

The temporary truce provided Rasin's friends some time to create a rival arc lighting company. In the fall of 1887 they founded the Waterhouse Electric Com-

50. See *Proceedings of NELA at its First Annual Convention* and *Proceedings of the National Electric Light Association at the Second Annual Convention*; *Proceedings of National Electric Light Association at the Third Semi-Annual Convention, Held at Boston Massachusetts, August 9–11, 1887 and the Fourth Annual Convention Held at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, February 21–23, 1888* (Boston: Press of Modern Light and Heat, 1888); Chi-nien Chung, "Networks and Governance in Trade Associations: AEIC and NELA in the Development of the American Electricity Industry 1885–1910," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 17 (1997): 57–110.

51. *The Electrical World* VI (8) August 22, 1885, p. 78; *Sun*, February 11, 1886; *Proceedings of NELA at its First Annual Convention* and *Proceedings of NELA at the Second Annual Convention*.

52. *Sun*, April 8, August 25, October 1, and December 23, 1887.

pany of Baltimore, a local franchise of a small arc lighting company. The incorporators included William Pope, one of the few electricians working in the city, and Robert Rennert, a good friend of Rasin's and proprietor of the hotel that was one of his preferred hangouts. A few months later, Henry Fledderman, a Rasin political agent who had just completed a term as sheriff of the city, became a director in the company. The company bought the old sugar refinery building on O'Donnell's wharf to house its engines and dynamos and leased the equipment and rights of the Washington Telephone Company. This deal was an attempt to circumvent the requirements of the law passed at the last legislature. The Waterhouse Company promised it could light the city's streets for less than the Brush Company.[53]

The city council finally passed an ordinance providing for a new one-year electric contract in the spring of 1889. The ordinance did not specify that the contract go to a particular company but instead set up a bidding process with the maximum cost set at forty cents per lamp. On June 1 the interested parties met in the mayor's office to open the bids, which the ordinance required to be submitted by noon. The Brush bid was for the maximum allowed. Francis W. King, the superintendent of lamps, a local politician with old ties to the Brush Company, arrived a few minutes after the specified time with the Waterhouse bid. An advertisement for the contract had indicated that the bids should go to the superintendent's office. The Brush representatives claimed that the Waterhouse bid—33 ½ cents per lamp for a limited area—was too late and did not conform to the ordinance. The claim was upheld, and the Brush Company won the contract. The Waterhouse complained that the whole affair was "a made up thing" but could not overturn the contract.[54]

The following year the city council passed an ordinance authorizing a five-year electric contract with the city retaining the right to reconsider the contract every two years. Mayor Robert Davidson expressed strong reluctance at the length of the contract stipulated by the ordinance. Opponents of the ordinance, however, noted, "Many of the parties largely interested in the electric light job are, as is well known, the personal friends of the Mayor." He signed the ordinance and made an agreement with the Brush Company at thirty-five cents per lamp.[55]

By the time the council passed the 1890 ordinance, several significant changes had altered the structure of the local electrical industry. The Westinghouse Company of Pittsburgh controlled the Brush, the Waterhouse, and the United States Electric Companies in Baltimore. In 1888 and 1889, Westinghouse gained financial

53. *Sun*, October 1 and December 23, 1887; February 4 and May 23, 1888; February 12, 1889; February 8, 1890; Passer, *Electrical Manufacturers*, 147.

54. *Sun*, March 21, 28, April 2–5, 15–16, May 21, and June 3–5, 1889; *Proceedings of NELA at its First Annual Convention*, 244.

55. *Sun*, May 24, June 9–14, 27, 30, and October 21, 1890.

control of the United States and Waterhouse parent companies as a means of competing in the arc lighting business. The local United States and Brush Companies had coordinated their operations for several years and had interlocking directorates by 1890. In the spring of that year, Westinghouse took over the Baltimore Brush and Waterhouse Companies. These mergers and acquisitions were part of a long wave of industry consolidation. They vertically integrated the local production of electric light into the rapidly developing Westinghouse electric system.[56]

Morrison's relationship with the Brush Company ended about the same time that Westinghouse put together the combination of Baltimore electric companies. His departure coincided with several professional and political setbacks. The Baxter Motor Company failed financially, and a reorganization of the company divorced him from its operations. Rasin's successes at a series of elections had diminished his political influence, and, with his resignation as warden in 1887, he no longer held an important patronage position. His Crescent Club was entering a period of financial turmoil that led to the selling of its clubhouse in 1891.[57]

Morrison attempted to take the city arc lighting contract from his old associates at the Brush Company before the signing of the 1890 contract. Shortly before the city council took up the bill authorizing a new electric contract, Morrison and several associates, including Tuxworth, David E. Evans, and Alfred J. Carr, a police commissioner and one of the leading figures in the Crescent Club, formed the Maryland Electric Company. They aligned their new venture with the Thomson-Houston Electric Company and its subsidiary, the Fort Wayne Electric Company. During the 1880s, Thomson-Houston had become the dominant arc lighting company. Despite the strong backing, there was not enough time for the Maryland Electric Company to construct an arc lighting network. The company's initial hope had been to buy the Waterhouse plant on O'Donnell's wharf, but Westinghouse had outbid him on the property. He could only promise the city to have his operations in place by the fall. The Brush Company characterized its rival as a "paper" company, unable to provide lighting for the city.[58]

Undeterred, Morrison sought to get new footholds in the electric light and street railway industries. Early in 1892 his Maryland Electric Company bought the franchises and plant of the failed International District Telegraph and Construction Company on Pratt Street, near Fremont, and began to operate an arc lighting network. His local Fort Wayne Company bought the plant of the failed

56. *Sun*, April 8 and October 1, 1887; April 16 and May 24, 1890; November 14, 1898; February 1, 1899; *New York Times*, April 15–16, 1890; Baldwin, *Autobiography*, 17–19; Passer, *Electrical Manufacturers*, 147–49; Wainwright, *Philadelphia Electric Company*, 24–25; *American Electrical Directory for 1890–91* (Fort Wayne: Star Iron Tower Co., 1891), 177.

57. *Sun*, December 5, 1888; October 10 and December 21, 1889; January 30, 1890; *Electric Power* I (11) November 1889, p. 370; II (16) April 1890, p. 140; II (24) December 1890, p. 420.

58. *Sun*, April 11, 1889; June 7, 9-14, 27, 30, 1890; *Electric Power* I (5) May 1889, p. 142.

Wenstrom Electric Company at Calverton to produce electric street railway equipment. Robert Rennert, Enoch Pratt, Mayor Ferdinand C. Latrobe, ex-Governor James B. Groome, and Governor Elihu Jackson had incorporated the company a few years earlier. The investment group planned to produce electrical equipment, most importantly an improved single-reduction-gear street railway motor. The company's formation was similar to the Brush Company's formation, a small network of local businessmen and politicians investing their money and influence to bring a technological innovation to market. Its product, however, did not compete successfully against Westinghouse and General Electric motors, and the company had to sell its assets to pay creditors.[59]

In October 1893 a spectacular nighttime fire destroyed the Brush plant on Monument Street. "The only thing left standing of the immense plant [were] the two draft chimneys and the bare walls." A strong wind sent burning embers from the fire onto the city jail, where Morrison had served as warden for seven years, setting that building on fire. "The fire went from point to point quickly, and soon one wing was so overspread by the flames that its destruction was sure." Panic spread among prisoners trapped in their cells. "The poor creatures who had not been reached by the wardens who were unlocking the doors screamed in terror. Some tore their hair out by the roots, some battered their heads against the walls of the cells, some fell upon the floor in a faint, while others—notably the colored prisoners—lost their wits and began to shout and laugh and sing." Two of the prisoners died.[60]

Morrison's Maryland Electric briefly used its plant to power parts of the Brush network disabled by the fire. Together with the United States Company, it ensured that the streets would not remain completely dark while the Brush Company worked to resume operations. The arrangement continued for several weeks. Over the following year, the Brush Company rebuilt its plant and installed several one thousand–horsepower vertical compound engines directly connected to two-phase alternating current dynamos used to power up to sixty-thousand incandescent lamps, and six smaller engines driving dynamos used to power the company's arc lights. The larger engines had become famous at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, where they provided the power that illuminated the White City.[61]

Morrison moved from enterprise to enterprise. He continued to sell a wide variety of "Electric Light, Telegraph, Telephone and Electric Railway Supplies"

59. *Electric Power* II (19) July 1890, p. 244; *Sun*, March 1, 1892; October 3, 20, 28, 1893; November 2, 1893; September 29, 1899, p. 10; Passer, *Electrical Manufacturers*, 258–63.

60. *Sun*, October 14–16, 1893.

61. *Sun*, October 16–17, 21, 24, and November 7, 25, 1893. Baltimore received four or five of the twelve Westinghouse engines from Chicago. See *Sun*, August 20, 1894; *New York Times*, July 5, 1895, p. 5.

through the Morrison Southern Electric Company. In June 1894 the municipal government awarded his Maryland Electric Company a contract to light the streets on the western side of the city at thirty-five cents per lamp and the Brush Company to light them on the eastern side at the same rate. Morrison later split the Maryland Electric properties into local Fort Wayne and Edison Electric Illuminating Companies. His Fort Wayne Company offered "Central Station and Isolated Plant Equipments for Arc, Direct Current and Alternating Incandescent Lighting and Power Transmission" from its works at Calverton. His Edison Company supplied electricity from the plant on Pratt Street.[62]

In 1897, Morrison left the Edison Company to form the Northern Electric Company out of the reorganized United States Electric Company. The United States plant at Centre and Holliday became superfluous to the Westinghouse interests after the reconstruction of the Monument Street plant, and the Northern Company bought out the property. The investors in the new endeavor included Charles M. Armstrong, a lawyer and local politician with long-time ties to both the Crescent Club and Morrison's electrical interests.[63]

Morrison played a greatly diminished role in the Baltimore electric industry following a large financial consolidation in 1899. A local syndicate headed by Alexander Brown & Sons, which already controlled the street railway lines in the city, purchased the Brush, Edison, and Northern Electric Companies. The syndicate hoped to improve the efficiency of the production and distribution of electricity. Separate plants were inefficient because of economies of scale and uneven load factors in the fragmented system. An integrated system would not only increase economies of scale but even out load factors. Streetcar use, a large consumer of electric power, peaked early in the morning and late in the afternoon, factory and domestic power during the day, and electric light at night. It was inefficient to maintain plants that operated at peak levels for only limited periods during the day. The consolidation also reduced financing costs. The resulting two companies, the United Electric and Power Company and the United Railways and Electric Company, shared officers and operated in parallel.[64]

In 1906 another merger linked the United Light and Power Company with the Consolidated Gas Company to create the Consolidated Gas Electric Light and Power Company. The Consolidated later became Baltimore Gas & Electric (BG&E). In 1956, BG&E joined the Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland (PJM)

62. *Sun*, January 21, 1888; June 8, May 1, and June 21, 1894; *R. L. Polk & Co.'s Baltimore City Directory for 1896* (Baltimore: R. L. Polk & Co., 1896), 1857–58.

63. *Sun* October 2, 1897; November 14, 1898.

64. *Sun*, November 14 and December 9, 1898; February 1, 3, 7, 21, 24, May 8–9, and September 29, 1899; *New York Times*, June 19, 1899, p. 9. On contemporary development of a similar system, see Thomas P. Hughes, *Networks of Power: Electrification in Western Society, 1880–1930* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983, 1993), 208–22.

Interconnection, creating a vast regional electric network. The capacity of the network expanded dramatically. The small 125-horsepower Buckeye engines initially in use at the plant on Monument Street gave way to the groundbreaking Westinghouse engines. During the early decades of the twentieth century, the older electric plants in the city, including the Inner Harbor power plant that powered the city's streetcars, closed. Electricity generation shifted to the turbines at the Pratt Street station, Westport Power Plant on the Patapsco River, where up to two tons of coal burned per minute, and the Holtwood Hydroelectric-Steam Plant in Pennsylvania. The capacity of the plants increased from a few hundred horsepower in 1883 to 92,000 horsepower in 1910 to 427,000 horsepower in 1925.[65]

Morrison was the most active figure in the early development of this regional network. He built several large telegraph and telephone networks and the first significant electric light network in the city. He had a leading role in all three electric companies that formed the core of the consolidated companies that became BG&E and at some point managed almost all of the significant electric operations in the city. Following the creation of the United Electric and Power Company in 1899, he continued working as an electrical engineer and as an electric equipment supplier but gradually scaled back his operations. He remained involved in Democratic politics, especially in the years immediately following the sale of the Northern Electric Company, but never regained his earlier prominence. He settled into retirement, spending much of his time at a much smaller but still lavishly furnished Crescent Club, with an extensive library and fine artwork, and eventually lived in its house. He died on July 3, 1916.[66]

This brief survey of Morrison's career suggests the importance of mapping social networks in Baltimore to an understanding of the larger economic and technological developments that transformed the city and region in the late nineteenth century. His extensive personal network was not only crucial to his political and professional success but also was absolutely central to the expansion of electric lighting in the city. It was this network, more than his practical electrical engineering knowledge, that made him one of the most important figures in his industry. It gave him the influence necessary to advance the interests of the Brush Electric Light Company and his other electric enterprises through webs of established and interlocking personal and institutional relationships that entangled several competitors. The nature of these webs, as much as the most significant technological advances, shaped the development of the electric light industry in Baltimore. Morrison's story provides some insights into their essential nature.

65. Arthur W. Hawks, Jr., *Baltimore's Sixteen Years of Super-Power* (Baltimore: Consolidated Gas Electric Light & Power Company, 1926), 12.

66. *Sun*, July 4, 1916, p. 12 (obituary); *Crescent Democratic Club Library Catalogue* (Baltimore: Press of Guggenheim, Weil & Co., 1904).

Research Notes & Maryland Miscellany

A Load of Guano: Baltimore and the Growth of the Fertilizer Trade

PETE LESHER

Agricultural needs in the American South drove a worldwide search for fertilizer sources in the mid-nineteenth century. Tobacco, cultivated in the Chesapeake region beginning in the seventeenth century, and cotton, which enjoyed intensified cultivation in the South during the first half of the nineteenth century, each drained the soil of nutrients.[1] As more land was cultivated, it became less feasible to allow fields to lie fallow for extended periods to recover from nutrient depletion. Societies organized for agricultural reform in the early nineteenth century began to promote the use of manure and other fertilizers for most crops. Baltimore's proximity to important agricultural hinterlands and its enterprising business community would lead the city to an early and leading role in the fertilizer trade and industry.

Bird guano from Peru first arrived in Baltimore in 1832 in two casks consigned to John S. Skinner, editor of the *American Farmer,* who presumably was experimenting with this substance as part of his effort to promote the use of fertilizers.[2] Guano took hold more quickly in Britain and in European markets than it did in America. An 1842 article in a Baltimore paper reported "a new kind of manure called ghano, brought from the Chincha Islands, in the Pacific Ocean."[3] Shortly

1. Although no one knew it at the time, tobacco plants, after several years in the same fields, actually weakened less from soil depletion than from underground worms (nematodes) and fungi attacking the roots. Planters thought the soil had become "worn out."
2. T. Courtenay J. Whedbee, *The Port of Baltimore in the Making* (Baltimore: F. Bowie Smith & Son, 1953), 54; Frank Henry, "The Plant-Food Capital of the Nation," *Baltimore Sun,* July 11, 1954, 11.
3. *Niles' National Register,* June 4, 1842,

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Table 1: Guano Imports to the United States (in tons)

Origin	1850	1861
Peru	5,750	97,485
Other South America	5,850	
New Granada (Columbia, Ecuador)		2,738
Venezuela		1,980
Mexico		460
British West Indies	140	6,209
Danish West Indies		180
French West Indies		100
British Possessions in Africa		320
Sandwich Islands (Hawaii)		120
Other Pacific islands		2,610
Totals	11,740	112,202

Sources: Commerce and Navigation. Report of the Secretary of the Treasury for the Year Ending 30th June 1850 (Washington: Gideon & Co., 1851), 148; *Commerce and Navigation. Report of the Secretary of the Treasury for the Year Ending 30th June 1861* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1862), 1:230, 392.

after this, Baltimore began regular importation of guano in small quantities. Imports to Baltimore were distributed to farming areas around Maryland and the upper South, especially Virginia and North Carolina.

One of the earliest farming communities to experiment successfully with guano was Sandy Spring, Maryland. Sandy Spring was a small community north of Washington that suffered from soil exhaustion in the early nineteenth century, to the extent that local farmers saw land values falling in the 1830s. They tried lime in 1838, then discovered bone dust was a useful fertilizer, but when guano was introduced in 1844, it was dubbed a "miracle of agriculture" and hailed on the grounds that "there was no need now to emigrate to newer, richer soils."[4]

Imports of guano to the United States rose from under 12,000 tons in 1850 to over 100,000 tons in 1861.[5] As seen in Table 1, most of that guano came from Peru (87 percent in 1861), and Baltimore was its largest port of entry. In 1853, Maryland passed a guano inspection law to ensure the quality of the product, a move that tended to divert some of the trade to other ports, particularly New York. Peru's

4. William Henry Farquhar, *Annals of Sandy Spring or Twenty Years History of a Rural Community in Maryland* (Baltimore: Cushings & Bailey, 1884), xxviii–xxix.

5. *Commerce and Navigation. Report of the Secretary of the Treasury for the Year Ending 30th June 1850* (Washington: Gideon & Co., 1851), 148; *Commerce and Navigation. Report of the Secretary of the Treasury for the Year Ending 30th June 1861* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1862), 1:230,392.

Table 2: Guano Imports in Baltimore and New York (tons)

Port	1861	1894	1897	1908
Baltimore	53,959	2,474	2,233	1,997
New York	47,979	1,000	25	683
Total U.S.	112,202	5,260	7,103	27,665

Sources: Commerce and Navigation. Report of the Secretary of the Treasury for the Year Ending 30th June 1861, 2:134, 280; *Commerce and Navigation* 1894, 49; *Commerce and Navigation* 1897, 114; *Commerce and Navigation*, 1908, 368.

government monopoly on the guano trade, however, shifted that trade back to Baltimore by 1858, when a new firm acquired the charter to export guano to the United States.[6] Baltimore would continue to lead New York in the import of guano for much of the nineteenth century, as shown in Table 2.

At first guano was used as fertilizer in its raw form, but several firms, including those in Baltimore, began using the guano as an ingredient in a mix or processed fertilizer. A significant industry dedicated to the development, manufacture, and distribution of chemical fertilizers grew up in Baltimore, with bird guano and animal bone dust as principal ingredients.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the greatest volume of imported guano came from the Chincha Islands, a small group of cliff-fringed rocky islands off the coast of Peru, where Chilean pelicans (*Pelicanus thagus*) had left deposits for centuries, some of them up to two hundred feet deep. It was both the most expensive and the most efficacious guano for fertilizer because of its high nitrogen content. The Chincha Islands, more arid than other guano locales, kept the guano's nitrogen content from being leached out by rainwater. Deposits at locations in the Caribbean and off the coast of Africa had a lower nitrogen to phosphorus ratio.

The Peruvian firm F. Barreda y Hermano (and Brother) was formed in 1851 to obtain a charter from Peru's government to be the exclusive supplier of Peruvian guano to the United States, and it remained in business during the 1850s when American guano consumption expanded significantly. The firm's principal was Felipe Barreda, who remained in Lima, Peru, while his younger brother Federico Barreda (1827–1883) represented the firm in the United States. Guano was consigned to Barreda but remained the property of Peru until sold. Like the other Peruvian guano exporters who had exclusive charters to other foreign markets, Barreda made money not only on commissions but on high-interest loans advanced to the Peruvian government that were paid off by the sale of guano.[7]

6. Whedbee, *Port of Baltimore*, 55.

7. Frederick Barreda Sherman, *From the Gaudalquivir to the Golden Gate by Way of Lima, Baltimore, New York, Newport, Washington, London, Paris, and Cuajiniqualapa. Being the*

Barreda effectively expanded the market for guano by printing advertising brochures and by giving away fifty tons of guano, a few sacks at a time, to American farmers. His efforts succeeded in boosting U.S. imports of guano to about 61,000 tons annually by 1855.[8]

From a base in Baltimore, Barreda built a distribution network in the United States stretching from Boston to New Orleans. Some ships arriving from Peru went straight to a U.S. port such as New York, Charleston, or New Orleans for the sale of guano to regional markets, but most stopped first at Hampton Roads, just inside the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. Curiously, although Barreda maintained offices in Baltimore, he did not need to bring most of the guano to that city for distribution. From Hampton Roads, his chartered captains received orders to proceed to another port according to market demand.

The Barreda enterprise was remarkably efficient at communicating between hemispheres. Every fifteen days the Peruvian partner sent Federico a shipping report, listing the name, tonnage, and destination of every guano-laden ship on its way, as well as the same data for ships loaded and awaiting clearance at Callao, or currently loading, or waiting to go to the islands.[9] When it appeared that he would be inundated with coming cargos, Barreda made additional trips to find buyers.[10]

Barreda had considerable trouble in Baltimore. His buyers saw him as a monopolist who charged inflated prices. Maryland's 1853 guano inspection law may have been created as a response to Barreda's presence. Just a few months after his arrival in Baltimore, Barreda complained in a letter that he had, ". . . eight boats unloading and two boats loading while I struggle with these people who are the most tricky scoundrels in Christendom."[11] In 1856, possibly because of regulatory pressures in Maryland, Barreda relocated his offices from Baltimore to New York.[12]

The guano supply was interrupted late in 1856 when a Peruvian insurrection involving much of the Peruvian navy seized the Chincha Islands. The insurrection was squashed, but in the confusion, the Peruvian government claimed that it had not received all it was due on guano contracts. It sent investigators to contracted guano traders in France, England, and the United States. When Barreda refused to open his books to the government investigator, his firm lost its contract in early

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Story of the Lives of Federico Luciano Barreda y Aguilar and Matilde Laverrerie y Barreda his Wife with Certain Information Concerning their Ancestors and their Descendants (Mill Valley, Cal.: Hall and Smith Co., 1979), 20, 24–25.

8. Sherman, *From the Gaudalquivir to the Golden Gate,* 27–28.

9. Shipping report, F. Barreda and Brother Papers, MS 2281, Maryland Historical Society; also Sherman, *From the Gaudalquivir to the Golden Gate,* 37.

10. Letter of Federico Barreda to Matilde Laverrerie, Baltimore, August 30, 1852, as translated in Sherman, *From the Gaudalquivir to the Golden Gate,* 30.

11. Ibid., as translated in Sherman, *From the Gaudalquivir to the Golden Gate,* 29.

12. Sherman, *From the Gaudalquivir to the Golden Gate,* 46.

1858. Another Peruvian firm, Zaracondegui, succeeded Barreda for distribution to the United States, and this firm returned the headquarters for the Peruvian guano trade to Baltimore.[13]

As demand increased, additional sources of guano were sought and discovered, particularly in other parts of South America, the Caribbean, the Hawaiian Islands and other Pacific islands, and off the coast of Africa. Capt. Edward K. Cooper of the Baltimore bark *Abbotsford* discovered what he thought was guano on an uninhabited Caribbean island in 1856. One of Cooper's crew had died on the voyage, and he chose this island twenty-five miles south of Haiti to bury the man. In digging the grave, the crew found powdery earth in their shovels, which they took to be guano. In a move ultimately backed by Congress, Captain Cooper staked a claim to the group of four islands, naming the group the Guano Islands and the largest one Navassa Island.

The deposits on Navassa turned out to be not so much guano but a phosphate-rich mineral that may be an altered version of two-million-year-old "fossilized" guano. Although these deposits were discovered in 1856, extensive exploitation of this source did not take place until after the American Civil War. In response to this discovery, Congress passed the Guano Islands Act, allowing U.S. citizens who discovered and peacefully occupied islands with guano deposits to claim them as U.S. possessions. The claim for Navassa Island was made in 1857 and was formally recognized by the United States in 1859.[14] Haiti disputed the claim and occupied the island in 1859, but Cooper's possession was backed up by the U.S. Navy and a detachment of marines.[15] There were no American citizens to defend at Navassa, only American commercial interests.

Captain Cooper was a partner in the Baltimore firm of R. W. L. Rasin, the first Baltimore fertilizer firm to import guano from Caribbean sources. Rasin imported guano or guano-like deposits from Roncader Island, Cay Arenas, Morant Keys, and Pedro Keys, in addition to Navassa Island, which does not seem to have been a significant source for this firm. Rasin experimented with a number of sources for fertilizer ingredients. In addition to guano, he introduced the use of ground bone and other slaughterhouse refuse for fertilizers.[16]

In 1864, R. W. L. Rasin sold his interests in Navassa Island to the Navassa Phosphate Company of New York, which was organized to pursue this business. Navassa Phosphate continued some of its operations in Baltimore with Rasin as

13. Ibid., 51, 55–56.
14. David P. Billington Jr., "Note on the Legal History of Navassa Island," http://members.aol.com/davidpb4/legal.html.
15. George W. Howard, "R. W. L. Rasin & Co's Chemical Works," *The Monumental City, Its Past History and Present Resources* (Baltimore, 1873), 734.
16. Ibid., 734.

its Baltimore agent.[17] By late 1865, when mining engineer Eugene Gaussoin of Baltimore inspected the Navassa operation, the company was aggressively exploiting its island resource. The workforce consisted of 180 black laborers and thirty white supervisors and mechanics. In the six weeks Gaussoin observed the work, two ships, six brigs, including the one aboard which he arrived, the Navassa company's *Romance*, and three schooners sailed from the island with full cargos.[18]

Caribbean and Mexican sources of guano were imported in greater quantities in the 1870s as the Peruvian sources approached exhaustion. Although Peruvian guano was still considered superior because of its higher nitrogen content, as the last of it was scraped and blasted off the volcanic islands the shipments came mixed with as much as 20 to 50 percent gravel, and naturally farmers were reluctant to spread stones in their fields.[19]

Navassa Island was not very well suited as a port. It is about two square miles in area and its shape has been compared to an oyster shell. Its shore is fringed by vertical cliffs that plunge straight to the water except along the poorly sheltered Lulu Cove on the southwest shore, where a small pier was constructed on a lower cliff with a ladder dropping down to the water. Ships had to moor off the island, and all of the guano had to be first lowered into boats, then lightered out to the waiting vessels. This operation prolonged the process of loading vessels, and vessels remained vulnerable to storms while anchored there. In 1883, Captain John H. Tawes of Crisfield got into trouble with a load of guano from Navassa Island while in command of the half brig *D.C. Chapman* of Baltimore. Shortly after she sailed from the island she was caught in a blow that dismasted her, ultimately leaving her stranded on the north shore of Jamaica.[20]

Guano was a cargo of last resort for captains and ship owners. The yellowish dust would cover every part of the ship during loading. The noxious odor of ammonia that was released by the guano during handling dried out noses and irritated eyes; crew who were working to place the cargo in the hold were often unable to remain in the hold for more than five minutes at a time. The cargo also presented a fire hazard. The only upside was that it killed rats and other vermin on the ship, but it was equally hard on the ship's cat.[21]

Conditions were worse still for the miners removing the guano deposits off the islands, particularly because of the abusive treatment they suffered. On the

17. Ibid., 735.
18. Eugene Gaussoin, *Memoir of the Island of Navassa* (Baltimore: The author, 1866), 5.
19. *Baltimore Sun,* August 27, 1875.
20. Robert H. Burgess, ed., *Coasting Captain. Journals of Captain Leonard S. Tawes Relating His Career in Atlantic Coastwise Sailing Craft from 1868 to 1922* (Newport News, Va.: The Mariners' Museum, 1967), 133.
21. Basil Lubbock, *The Nitrate Clippers* (Glasgow: Brown, Son & Ferguson, 1932), 5–6.

Peruvian guano islands, Chinese laborers were imported and coerced to mine the islands. On Navassa Island in the Caribbean, black laborers were brought in, and conditions were no better for the blacks on Navassa than for the Chinese "coolie" laborers on the Chincha Islands.

The story of the abusive treatment of laborers on Navassa Island and the guano and phosphate trade from the Caribbean is illustrated by the log of the American bark *Albemarle*. *Albemarle* was a medium clipper, launched in 1878 from the Skinner and Sons shipyard in Baltimore for use in the coffee trade from Rio de Janeiro. She was an advanced ship for her day, with wire standing rigging, and she maintained a reputation for speed.[22] Her first owners, commission merchants Whedbee and Dickinson of Baltimore, kept her employed in the coffee trade for twelve years.[23] In 1890 she was sold to the Navassa Phosphate Company,[24] which sent her on successive voyages between Baltimore and Navassa, sometimes returning to Carteret, New Jersey, instead of Baltimore, and also calling at other Caribbean ports.

In 1891, about a year after *Albemarle* came into the Navassa Phosphate Company's hands, her long-time master and part-owner Captain William H. Forbes took command. Forbes's log survives to show *Albemarle*'s activity in this period. For the next eight months, *Albemarle* made three voyages to the Caribbean, each of them originating in Baltimore and each touching at Navassa. On each southbound trip, *Albemarle* carried ship's stores, provisions, and equipment for mining phosphate, as well as African American laborers; she returned with guano and phosphate. On one voyage, she carried coal southbound to Laguyra, the port for Caracas, Venezuela, but then sailed back to Navassa for her return cargo.

On the first voyage recorded in Captain Forbes's log, *Albemarle* returned with a tragic cargo: the corpses of three men, white supervisors slain in a violent strike that had taken place on Navassa Island in 1889. The bodies were first interred on the island and in 1891 returned to their families for burial near home. Also on this trip, 153 African-American laborers returned home to Maryland, 108 of whom had been involved in the strike. Two of these men were kept in irons, and once during the voyage, on June 26, 1891, the captain felt sufficiently suspicious of his passengers that he set a double watch.[25]

22. Howard I. Chapelle, *The National Watercraft Collection* (Washington: United States National Museum, 1960), 62–63.

23. *Boyd's Business Directory of Baltimore City, Arranged and Classified According to Business, 1876* (Washington: Wm. H. Boyd, 1876), 46; also directory for 1888.

24. Certificate of Register for Bark *Albemarle*, August 2, 1890, official number file 105787, RG 41, National Archives.

25. Capt. William H. Forbes, log of bark *Albemarle*, MS 1997.46, collection of Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

The trouble on Navassa with a poorly treated and restless labor force had festered until the workers rioted and killed several of their supervisors. Most of the laborers were from Maryland, where they had signed fifteen-month contracts to work for the Navassa Phosphate Company. They were paid $8 per month plus food and housing. Following maritime practice, the pay was due at the end of the contract, but there were deductions for sickness at $1 per day and punitive fines for various infractions. Food was rationed, but tobacco and canned food were offered at a company store at inflated prices, again charged against wages due to the laborer. By the end of the contract, the company might owe no wages at all.[26]

Housing was similarly poor, in unventilated rooms with no mattresses, although mattresses could be purchased at exorbitant prices. Added to these deplorable conditions was the cruelty of the supervisors, who punished recalcitrant laborers by tricing them up by their wrists for up to six hours in the tropical sun. Complaints to the island superintendent were to no avail.[27]

Finally, on September 14, 1889, the workers rioted, killing four white supervisors and fatally injuring a fifth. Six days later a British warship named *Forward* was alerted to the scene and removed the remaining whites, six of whom survived, all of them residents of Baltimore.[28] Eighteen black laborers were charged with murder or accessory to murder, and they, along with witnesses, were brought back to Baltimore for a series of five heavily publicized trials. George S. Key was charged with murder of James Mahon with a pistol; Caesar Fisher and Henry Jones (aka "Texas Shorty") with the murder of Thomas Foster with an axe and a stone; Henry Jones with the murder of Joseph Fales with an axe; Edward Smith (aka "Devil") with murdering Samuel Marsh with a stone; and Stephen Peters, Charles H. Smith, and Charles H. Davis with the murder of William T. Shea.[29] The juries sentenced Key, Jones, and Smith to death, but African-American churches successfully petitioned President Benjamin Harrison to commute the sentences to life imprisonment.[30]

The bark *Albemarle* met her end in 1894 while still working for the Navassa Phosphate Company. She had just delivered another group of laborers to Navassa, and was en route to Puerto Rico to deliver coal when her cargo caught fire and she burned at sea. Navassa Phosphate Company continued operations in Baltimore and New York until the Spanish-American War. With its shipping operations in-

26. Capt. Edgar K. Thompson, USN (ret.), "Navassa: A Forgotten Acquisition," *The American Neptune,* 26 (1966): 174.
27. Ibid., 172–74.
28. *Baltimore American,* October 1 and 12, 1891.
29. *The Navassa Island Riot* (Baltimore: The American Job Office, 1889), 6–7.
30. *The Baltimore Sun Almanac,* 1891, 92; Al Kamen, "Guardians of the Guano," *Washington Post Magazine,* August 2, 1998, 3.
31. Billington, "Note on the Legal History of Navassa Island."

Table 3: Fertilizer Industry in Maryland and New York

Maryland	# establishments	# hands employed	capital $	products $
1870	15	126	438,800	632,352
1890	53	1,051	6,935,914	6,208,025
1900	40	1,016	7,003,376	5,481,905

New York	# establishments	# hands employed	capital $	products $
1870	11	168	213,900	289,011
1890	n/a			
1900	32	1,033	4,600,559	3,147,894

Sources: The Statistics of the Wealth and Industry of the United States, Ninth Census, vol. III (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1872), 434; *Manufactures, Part II: States and Territories,* Twelfth Census, Vol. VIII (Washington: United States Census Office, 1901), 330, 550–51, 600–601, 764–65.

terrupted by war, the company went bankrupt. The new owner of the company abandoned its claim to Navassa Island in about 1901, and since then the mineral resources have not been exploited.[31] In fact, some extracted phosphate-rich soil is still piled near the place where it was to be taken off the island.

The guano trade tapered off early in the century as other sources were developed for chemical fertilizers. Unlike some of the other island sources, Navassa's supply was never exploited to exhaustion. A lighthouse built on the island in 1929 was abandoned by the U.S. Coast Guard in 1996. Today, the island is still claimed by the United States and administered by the Department of the Interior, which maintains it as a preserve and restricts visitation.

The fertilizer industry continued to thrive on the Chesapeake even after the guano trade dropped off, and by the turn of the twentieth century, Maryland's leading position in the industry over rival New York was assured, as seen in Table 3, which compares the number of establishments, work force, capital investment, and value of products from the fertilizer industry in these two states as represented in the federal manufacturing censuses of 1870, 1890, and 1900.

Maryland's fertilizer industry was already beginning to spread outward from Baltimore by 1890. Of the fifty-three plants in Maryland reported in 1890, twenty-five were located in Baltimore, employing 61 percent of the hands working in the industry and producing 64 percent of the products as measured by value. By 1900 the industry was consolidating, and Baltimore had just seventeen of the forty Maryland fertilizer establishments, but nearly 70 percent of the workforce and 68 percent of production.[32]

32. *Manufactures, Part II: States and Territories,* Twelfth Census, Vol. VIII (Washington: United States Census Office, 1902), 342–43.

Fertilizers could be just as hazardous to handle on land as they were to transport by sea. In the early 1880s fires damaged or destroyed five fertilizer plants in Baltimore: Bowen & Mercer in Canton, Garrett & Sons below Canton, Popplein Phospate Works in Canton, S. A Wetzler & Co. on Bear Creek, and the massive plant of Zell's Guano Works on Fort Avenue in Locust Point.[33]

Although the manufacture of chemical fertilizer remained centralized in Baltimore, mixing plants and dealers cropped up in towns around the bay, many of them closer to the farms that needed the product. Cambridge, Salisbury, Pocomoke City, and Snow Hill, Maryland, and Seaford, Delaware, all acquired fertilizer mixing plants in the first half of the twentieth century. Tilghman Fertilizer in Salisbury was established before 1907 and remains in business today. Even William H. Valliant in the small watermen's town of Bellevue, Maryland, operated a fertilizer mixing plant as part of his complex that included an oyster house, a cannery, and an oyster shell crushing mill. Phosphate shipped north from Florida became one of the principal ingredients in these fertilizer mixes during the twentieth century.

In the early part of the century most fertilizer was carried loose, in bulk. Calvert Evans, a schooner captain from Cambridge recalled, "if the wind was blowing, you'd get solid covered up with it."[34] Later in the century, most of the fertilizer was shipped in bags. Fertilizer was shipped coastwise and around the bay in sailing vessels until the Second World War, and in a few cases, into the 1950s. The Chesapeake's homely ram schooners remained the most economically viable way to ship quantities of these bulk cargos including grain, lumber, and coal as well as fertilizer. The rams *Edwin & Maud, Edward R. Baird, Jr.*, and Captain Clarence Heath's *Jennie D. Bell* were among the schooners to haul fertilizer around the bay, each of them working for the Worcester Fertilizer Company in Snow Hill.

The work of the Chesapeake Bay ram *Kinkora* exemplifies the fertilizer trade around the bay during the first half of the twentieth-century. Captain Charles Hopkins operated this three-masted vessel during the Depression. During the eight-year period from 1930 through 1937, Hopkins freighted ninety paying cargos on trips mostly within the Chesapeake. Of those ninety cargos, twenty-five were fertilizer or fertilizer components including acid phosphate, fish scrap, muriate potash, sulphate ammonia, potash, or imprecisely described "fertilizer material." Most of these cargos were shipped out of Baltimore to Eastern Shore destinations of Salisbury, Pocomoke City, or Snow Hill, but one load went from Baltimore to Norfolk. The load of sulphate ammonia went from Norfolk to Snow Hill, another load from Norfolk to Washington, North Carolina, and the fish scrap

33. *Baltimore Sun Almanac*, 1883, 1884, 1885.

34. C. Calvert Evans, quoted in Quentin Snediker and Ann Jenson, *Chesapeake Bay Schooners* (Centreville, Md.: Tidewater Publishers, 1992), 82.

was shipped from Lewes, Delaware, to Salisbury. Freight rates were very low, even in Depression dollars. They ranged from a high of $2 per ton for the fish scrap in 1930 to a low of eighty-five cents per ton for the fertilizer shipped down to North Carolina in 1935. Fertilizer (compared to oyster shells or lumber) was generally among the poorest-paying cargos for Captain Hopkins, though the fish scrap was a notable exception.[35] Nevertheless, through this period, *Kinkora* reliably paid her expenses and made a modest profit.

Today little fertilizer is shipped domestically by water in the Chesapeake region, though it is ever more critical to the region's agriculture. Trucks and highways have become the principal mode of transportation for this product, as with most other commodities. The fertilizer industry still thrives in the area, most of it marketed to the region's farms. Today Maryland has eleven nitrogenous or phosphatic fertilizer manufacturing plants, just two of which are in Baltimore, and sixteen additional fertilizer blending plants.[36] Most of these plants no longer front on navigable waterways, and little if any of their product moves by tug and barge, the modern successor to the schooner. Guano is no longer an ingredient in domestic chemical fertilizers, although chicken manure from Delmarva's plentiful chicken houses is used as a phosphate-rich source of fertilizer nutrients. Nevertheless, the fertilizer business, this root of modern agribusiness, started out as bird guano shipped from nearly halfway around the world to Atlantic ports, particularly on the Chesapeake.

35. Account book of Charles Hopkins for *Kinkora*, 1930–1937, MS 63, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

36. *2003 Maryland/DC Manufacturing Directory* (Evanston, Ill.: Manufacturer's News, Inc., 2002), 404.

Baltimore's Daily Press and Slavery, 1857–1860

NICHOLAS G. PENNIMAN IV

In the two decades from 1840 to 1860, Baltimore dailies stood in the vanguard of major changes then engulfing American newspapers. The introduction of the "penny press," priced for popular consumption, redefined "news" by commercializing ordinary events. The magnetic telegraph, introduced in Baltimore in 1837, revolutionized coverage of national and international events.[1] The rotary printing press, developed by Richard Hoe & Co. of New York, permitted the printing of a larger number of copies within the press time "window," an ability that was especially important to morning dailies.[2] Technological advances in papermaking led to a 50 percent drop in paper prices during the period. The prepaid cost of mailing a newspaper also fell by 50 percent with passage of the Postal Act of 1852, creating yet another economic stimulus to circulation.

During the same period, Baltimore and the nation were undergoing rapid cultural and economic changes. The guild system, compatible with hand labor production of goods, was beginning to feel the pressure of mass production. Industrialization, driven partially by adaptations to steam power that had begun in the 1830s, increasingly made its presence felt. The influx of a large number of Irish, driven by the potato famine of 1845–49, and a second wave of Germans, fleeing the Revolution of 1848, gave employers a large pool of labor willing to work for low wages. Labor began to organize, and strikes became the weapon of choice for workers demanding higher wages and improved conditions of employment.[3] These

1. The first telegraphic information to be published in an American newspaper appeared in the *Baltimore Patriot*: "One o'clock. – There has just been a motion in the House to go into committee of the whole on the Oregon question. Rejected, – ayes, 79; nays, 86." *Baltimore Patriot*, May 25, 1844.

2. Most American dailies in 1840 were printed on a hand-cranked single cylinder rolling over a fixed-type surface (flat-bed press) with an output of 2,000 papers per hour. The Hoe "Lightning" press, introduced in 1847, utilized a movable (rotary) printing surface and four impression cylinders that permitted printers to increase output to 8,000 papers per hour. The "Lightning" press cost $20,000–$25,000 installed.

3. A major strike by iron workers and laborers against Winans Iron Works, Vulcan Works, and other manufacturers of railroad equipment occurred in March 1853. The *American, Republican,* and *Sun* covered the story extensively, going so far as to report verbatim proceedings from meetings held by striking workers.

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associational tendencies expanded to embrace fire houses, fraternal lodges, and benevolent societies. In politics, Jacksonian Democracy brought popular participation that reached new participatory highs and moral lows. By the 1850s, Baltimore's growth had shifted to mass production of consumer goods such as shoes, boots, hats, and clothing. Women entered the work force in increasing numbers.[4]

In Baltimore multi-modal transportation systems combining shipping, barge canals, and railroads increased trade. Completion of the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad in 1838, the Baltimore & Susquehanna Railroad in 1840, and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad to Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1853 expedited access to Northeastern and Midwestern markets. Overseas trade found new markets in South America. Reflecting competitive realities of lower-priced Midwestern grain, farmers in southern Maryland and on the Eastern Shore shifted acreage to perishable vegetable crops for distribution in local and Northeastern markets.

Several disturbing socioeconomic trends were at work as well. Driven by economic opportunity, Baltimore's population experienced a boom. The number of foreign-born residents grew from 39,503 in 1850 to 61,824 in 1860.[5] Concurrent with immigration and population growth came increased vagrancy, crime, a growing prison population, and the need for a greater police presence. By 1850, Baltimore was home to over 29,000 free blacks who struggled with immigrant competition for jobs. With the ascendancy of organized gangs in the 1840s and early 1850s, and the recession of 1857, violence broke out regularly between free black workers, Germans, Irish, and nativist groups.[6]

In politics the changes were no less remarkable. The decades from 1840 to 1860 saw the decline and disappearance of the Whig Party, which had been particularly strong in Maryland, culminating with the party's 1852 convention held at the Maryland Institute.[7] The influence of Jacksonian elements within the Democratic Party, to which many prominent Whigs had migrated, declined as well. Into this power vacuum moved the Nativist impulse, in its ultimate incarnation as the American or Know-Nothing Party, with core support in Baltimore. The precur-

4. For an excellent discussion of the evolution of Baltimore's economy during the period, see Gary L. Browne, *Baltimore in the Nation: 1789–1861* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 161–76.

5. Enumeration for 1860 included Baltimore City and County combined and included forty-seven free blacks; data for 1850 did not separate the city from the county. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Seventh Census of the United States*, 1850 (Washington: Robert Armstrong, 1853) and *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1866)

6. An example of this was an attack by an Irish gang on German workers on the C&O canal on August 11, 1839.

7. For a discussion of this convention, see Charles R. Schultz, "The Last Great Conclave of the Whigs," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 63 (1968): 379–400.

sor of the modern national Republican Party arose in the 1850s in response to the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. Shifting allegiances, party politics, and organizational functionaries replaced the staid leadership of Maryland's landed gentry as many of the post-Revolutionary era's political leaders passed away.[8]

The conflation of these trends created the dynamics of Baltimore City in the 1840s and 1850s, but underlying these historical threads lay two smoldering social issues: slavery and immigration. The positions taken on these issues by Baltimore's daily newspapers are instructive. This paper will make a preliminary foray into the attitude toward and coverage of slavery by Baltimore's newspapers, particularly as they covered two major events—the Dred Scott decision of 1857 and John Brown's raid on the arsenal at Harper's Ferry in 1859—and show that Baltimore's newspapers were both conservative and predictable in their development of editorial positions regarding the issue. Not until John Brown's raid did Baltimore newspapers directly and bluntly address the issue editorially.

Moreover, they never confronted the sister issue of immigration at all. Instead, newspapers reported extensively on concomitant manifestations of urban crowding attributable partly but not exclusively to immigration, namely the immediate threats to political and economic security brought about by the growing crime rate, organized mass violence, an increased prison population, rising unemployment and, in the 1850s, a growing number of families seeking private welfare assistance. Though people were often alarmed by immigration and the perceived dangers to public order and public health, in Baltimore, no organized effort materialized to restrict immigration such as occurred in the 1890s and 1920s, mainly because the antebellum economy eagerly absorbed foreign workers who facilitated manufacturers' efforts to control their labor costs. Newspaper proprietors in Baltimore were wont to criticize this source of low cost labor which contributed to the prosperity of the period.

This article will be more descriptive than analytical. It will examine story selection and placement, headline treatment, space allotments (column inches), and even advertising content, all of which provide a record of decisions made daily by Baltimore's editors and publishers. Over time these factors, as measured against the issues of the day, provide insight into the underlying philosophy of the newspapers' owners and managers, as did the "platform" published daily in each issue.[9] During this period editorials became an important component of the daily newspaper. Separately identified and titled, they were pungent with commentary and turgid prose and provided a window into the newspapers' approach to issues of the day.

8. Among the prominent individuals in this category were Charles Ridgley, who died in 1829; Charles Carroll, died in 1832; William Patterson, died in 1835; Cumberland Dugan, died in 1836; Samuel Smith, died in 1839.

9. Baltimore's dailies all stated their editorial predisposition in a succinct statement of principle, generally located on page two of each issue.

The Daily Press in Antebellum Baltimore

Baltimore's newspapers in the 1840s and 1850s can be divided into three general categories: mercantile papers, the penny press, and political newspapers.[10] The mercantile papers enjoyed a long lineage, and the oldest among them was the *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser.* Tracing its heritage, somewhat tenuously, back to the *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser,* first published on August 20, 1773, the *American* enjoyed a secure position within the Baltimore press for many years. Acknowledged to be, "a journal of impeccable respectability and high antiquity," it "specialized in news that would appeal to the commercial and other business interests."[11] By 1840 it was a four-page broadsheet, seven columns wide, measuring twenty-four inches by thirty-four inches. Page one was all advertising; page two was given over to commercial information, news and miscellany (light reading such as poetry and essays), and an occasional opinion column, the precursor to today's editorial page. Page three contained Baltimore market information, while page four was all advertising. The *American* was written for merchants and traders; shipping information and commodity prices were given prominence. Yet, as compared to other mercantile papers of the day, the *American* gave unusual emphasis to local events even before the arrival of the *Sun.* The *American* was a "fip"—a five-penny bit newspaper selling for 6 ¼ cents per single copy.[12]

The *Sun* was the fifth successful "penny press" newspaper to appear in the U.S.[13] According to its sanctioned history, "It was frankly a commoner's sheet."[14] The first edition was dated May 17, 1837. The *Sun* sold for one cent and made the daily newspaper available to a wide audience of new readers in Baltimore. It was a remarkable success. The paper claimed approximately 11,000 readers after its first year, 30,000 readers by 1850, and nearly 40,000 by 1860. In its original incarnation, the *Sun* measured 13 inches by 21 1/4 inches and employed the standard four-page, six-column format of the "penny press." In a departure from the traditional practice of running news on page two, it relied heavily upon page one news to attract readers.

10. Newspapers considered in this paper are: the *Sun*, the *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, the *Baltimore Republican,* the *Clipper,* the *Baltimore Patriot and Daily Gazette,* and the *Daily Exchange.* All published continuously with the exception of the *Daily Exchange*, which commenced on February 22, 1858.

11. Gerald W. Johnson et al., *The Sunpapers of Baltimore: 1837–1937* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937), 4.

12. The five-penny bit referred to the Spanish half-real, a common form of coin currency in the United States in the 1830s worth 6 ¼ cents. It was a common price for mercantile newspapers and, in New Orleans, was called the "picayune," from which the contemporary *New Orleans Times-Picayune* got its name. By 1857, the *American* was selling for two cents.

13. Preceding the *Sun* as successful "penny press" newspapers to appear in the U.S. were the *New York Sun* and *New York Herald*, the *Boston Daily Times* and the *Philadelphia Public Ledger.*

14. Johnson et al., *The Sunpapers of Baltimore*, 6.

The "penny press" forced other dailies to change their strategies. Characterized by massive circulation, a low cover price, and allegiance to no party or candidate, many penny papers actually derided politicians and the political process. Nor did they show much deference to the clergy. This attitude, combined with an approach to news that emphasized the lurid and sensational, appealed to large numbers of readers who shared a general suspicion of society's upper crust. By placing information in the hands of large numbers of people, the "penny press" created the medium to inform and influence voters and change the focus of public attention from the spoken to the written word. Mass communication was born.[15] The *Sun*'s influence on other Baltimore papers cannot be understated. By 1845 all dailies were running a minimum of three columns of news on page one, a major departure from prior practice.

In the third category of daily newspapers fell the political press: the *Clipper*, closely allied with the Know-Nothing movement.[16] The afternoon *Republican,* staunchly supported Democratic Party positions and candidates.[17] The *Patriot and Daily Gazette* also numbered itself among the city's Democratic newspapers.[18]

The *Clipper* in 1840 was a small four-page sheet measuring ten by sixteen inches with a five-column format. It claimed to have daily circulation "of more than five times that of any other daily paper of Baltimore."[19] By 1848 the *Clipper* had expanded to a four-page sixteen by eighteen-inch sheet with a seven-column format, the standard of the day. It sold for one penny throughout the period.

Reflective of its readership, the paper carried a large number of ads for patent

15. The *Sun* had a profound effect on the cover prices of competing dailies in Baltimore. For example, the *American* sold for 6 ¼ cents in 1840 but by 1857 had dropped its single copy price to 2 cents. The *Exchange*, first published in 1858, also had a cover price of 2 cents.

16. The *Clipper* announced formation of, and support for, the American Republican party in its issue of November 5, 1844. As a result, the *Clipper* underwent a name change on November 11, 1844, when it became the *American Republican*. However, on January 1, 1847, it resumed publishing under its original name, the Baltimore *Clipper*.

17. Beale H. Richardson was founder and first editor and publisher. The *Republican* enjoyed a long history as the Democratic Party organ in Baltimore. It was the only afternoon newspaper of the six covered by this study, which allowed it to purloin news from the other dailies and to lay claim to being the "largest circulation afternoon paper in Baltimore" until the *Exchange* began publishing in 1858.

18. The *Patriot*, which stopped carrying federal legal notices in 1829, continued to carry Maryland state legal notices, testifying to the strength of the anti-Jackson element statewide and control of the state legislature. The *Patriot* strongly supported the Workingmen's Party, which split from the Jacksonian Democrats, and controlled Baltimore City politics during the period 1828–1836. The *Patriot* began to decline in both influence and circulation after 1836, and microfilm copies of it offer only an intermittent record of the newspaper.

19. *Clipper*, September 9, 1840, p. 2. The paper also boasted that its advertising rate was only one-fourth as high, in proportion to its circulation, as its competitors. These claims should be taken with a grain of salt.

medicines, liniments, and sarsaparilla cures. One ad screamed: "THE GREATEST MEDICAL DISCOVERY OF THE AGE: Pasture weeds for every kind of humour from the WORST SCROFULA down to a COMMON PIMPLE."[20] There were relatively few ads for steamship sailings and rail schedules so prominent in the *Sun* and the *American*.

The *Patriot* was a hefty four-page sheet measuring twenty-four by twenty-eight inches with an eight-column format. It was an afternoon paper, carrier-delivered, selling for 12 ½ cents a week.[21] The *Patriot* gave strong play to local news between 1840 and 1860, placing five columns of news on the front page and six more of news and commentary on page two. Eschewing the more flowery phrases of its competitors, the plain-spoken *Patriot* also adopted the unusual practice of attacking Baltimore's morning dailies on a regular basis on its front page.[22] Judging from its advertising base which featured silks, watches and jewelry, imported foods and whiskey, and professional services, the *Patriot* served a more affluent audience.

The political press served as an organizational tool for the parties where there was no central committee by posting notices of ward meetings; sponsoring events, gatherings, speeches and rallies; calling for nominating conventions; and subsequently acting as a recorder of proceedings. Individuals interested in running for office posted their availability and intentions in the appropriate newspaper.[23] The daily political press declined in circulation and influence in the 1840s and 1850s as the "penny press" gained readers, but the number of weekly political journals proliferated.[24]

The *Daily Exchange* deserves inclusion as a political newspaper, although its manifesto proclaimed "(w)e are Republicans, but our republicanism is neither red nor black, nor of any other *party*-colored dye. . . . We are Americans, but the Americanism we uphold is not that of a party, but of the country. . . . We are

20. *Clipper*, March 5, 1859, p. 2.

21. This price, 12 ½ cents, is exactly two "fips," which was probably not coincidental.

22. The editors of the *Patriot* regularly picked on editorial positions they disagreed with and ran from one- to four-inch rebuttals each afternoon.

23. In exchange for their support, the political papers were rewarded with legal advertising placed by elected officials. Much of this advertising appeared within the columns of the newspaper, but there were additional jobs such as the printing of ballots that enriched the "back shop" operation of the publisher.

24. One indication of the importance of the political press was the fact that during the period 1800–1820, thirteen men affiliated with newspapers were elected to Congress; from 1820 to 1840, forty-two were elected; from 1840 to 1860, 118 members of Congress had some relationship to a newspaper either before or after their congressional service (statistics based upon the last year of congressional term). See Jeffrey L. Pasley, *"The Tyranny of Printers": Newspaper Politics in the Early American Republic* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001).

Democrats, not as wedded, however, to any political faction."[25] Although started late in the antebellum period, the *Exchange* was initiated by the Baltimore business elite to be "their" paper.[26] The "editors and proprietors" were Charles G. Kerr and Thomas W. Hall, Jr., both attorneys. The paper was closely aligned with the Civic Reform Movement, led by George W. Brown, formed to rid the city of Know-Nothing political influence.[27]

The local daily press in 1858 was not limited to the six newspapers listed above. A strong German-language press existed in Baltimore, led by the tri-weekly *Der Deutsche Correspondent*, which began publishing in 1841, and the daily *Der Wecker*, founded in 1851 by Carl Schnauffer.[28] These papers were supported, and read, by a generally literate population of German-born immigrants from the industrialized northern and eastern parts of Germany who were able to integrate into Maryland's rapidly expanding economy.

Baltimore had no Irish press. Many Irish immigrants came from a rural, agricultural background, were less literate, and had more difficulty assimilating into the industrializing economy of Baltimore in the 1840s and 1850s. Nevertheless, Baltimore's dailies adopted a generally positive tone toward the local Irish-American community. If any paper attempted to appeal directly to Baltimore's Irish immigrant population it was the *Republican* with its heavy emphasis on local news and recruitment to the Democratic Party's cause. The *American*, blissfully ignoring the harsh realities of Irish emigration, was editorially warm and supportive: "The expatriated Irishman, in his new and happy home across the Atlantic, will be proud to hear of his native land's prosperity, while his English and Scotch successors will not fail to rejoice that the sturdy emigrant has found both wealth and welcome in a land of political and religious equality."[29] Not to be outdone, the *Sun* published Democratic Governor Enoch Louis Lowe's entire address to the Baltimore Irish Social and Benevolent Society as a page-one story in which the governor did not fail to capitalize on political opportunity: "Gentlemen, I bear public testimony here to-night that during my residence in Ireland,

25. *Daily Exchange*, February 22, 1858, p. 1. Presumably the owners and editors of the *Daily Exchange* felt they needed broad support for their efforts to rid the city of Know-Nothing political control.

26. The newspaper financial backers included Frank Key Howard, William H. Carpenter, and Henry M. Fitzhugh. All were close friends and business associates of George W. Brown.

27. The *Daily Exchange* was mobbed on August 12, 1858, by armed supporters of the Know-Nothing party. The newspaper offices were ransacked and employees assaulted. Subsequently, the financial interest of Messrs. Hall and Kerr was purchased in 1859 by Henry M. Fitzhugh to resolve a political difference of opinion among the owners.

28. For an excellent discussion of the German language press in Baltimore around the time of the Civil War, see Dieter Cunz, "The Maryland Germans in the Civil War," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 36 (1941): 394–419.

29. *American*, March 25, 1853, p. 2.

and in my frequent visits to every portion of it nearly, I never met one Irishman who did not open his house and his heart to me."[30]

The rest of Maryland enjoyed a vigorous, abundant press during the 1850s. Daily newspapers prospered in Frederick, Hagerstown, and Elkton. Weekly newspapers numbered in the dozens, led by the highly-regarded *Niles' Weekly Register*,[31] along with regularly issued magazines and church-related newsletters.[32] The influence of these publications should not be underestimated, but the daily press bore primary responsibility for informing the public of significant events affecting their lives. In fact the daily press by 1850 accounted for half the circulation of periodicals in the United States.[33]

The Gathering Storm

One finds in Baltimore newspapers relatively little comment on slavery in the 1840s and early 1850s. However, attention escalated sharply with the Dred Scott decision of 1857 and again after John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry. One possible explanation for the topic's earlier omission in newspapers: Baltimoreans generally preferred to ignore manifestations of the evils of the slave system. The relatively few slaves in the city worked in domestic positions. So too did many free blacks, who lived in areas seldom visited by would-be social reformers. Of more immediate, and visible, interest was escalating urban violence during elections and the deterioration of living conditions, partly as a result of immigration. The press pushed for political and civic reform as early as 1853 when the *American* printed George W. Brown's lecture to the Maryland Institute on "Lawlessness:

30. *Sun*, March 29, 1853, p. 1.

31. *Niles' Weekly Register* was founded in Baltimore by Hezekiah Niles. First published on September 7, 1811, it was printed and distributed weekly throughout the world. Niles died in 1839 and the paper was purchased by Jeremiah Hughes, an Annapolis native. The *Register* ceased publication on February 26, 1848.

32. The miscellanies were generally published on Saturday and Sunday and contained light reading fare. According to one source, Robert Bonner's *New York Ledger* enjoyed circulation in excess of 400,000 by 1860, a number unheard of in daily newspaper circles at the time. By comparison, the *New York Herald* was the largest circulation daily, claiming 77,000 readers in 1860. See Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism: 1690–1940* (New York: The McMillan Company, 1941), 317–23.

33. Driven in part by favorable economics, the number of newspapers in America grew from approximately 1,500 in 1840 to over 3,000 in 1860. Of these a constant proportion—10 percent—were dailies. However, this snapshot does not take into account the large number of newspapers commencing publication and a certain (albeit lesser) number that failed during the period. See David Paul Nord, *Communities of Journalism: A History of American Newspapers and Their Readers* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 94. Verified circulation numbers from this era are unavailable. There were no subscription lists, and newspapers were sold in bulk to newsboys in urban areas. Most data are derived from the newspapers and periodicals themselves, and should be treated with some skepticism by the reader.

The Evil of the Day."[34] Brown's speech coincided with a violent strike against a number of manufacturers but had broader application to the election process, fire house rivalries, and other instances of urban disorder.

That the abolitionist movement was financed and fomented by northern radicals bent upon destruction of the Union seems to have been the working hypothesis of Baltimore's daily press. The *Clipper* expressed these two disparate views in a single edition. First, the paper suggested that the Missouri Compromise would assist in "restoring tranquility to the country and restoring the Union." It then carried a second piece, with the type of invective regularly reserved for the abolitionist movement: "We see it stated that Fred Douglass, the negro orator of the Garrison school, paraded on the Battery a few days ago, with a white female resting on each arm and leered upon some gentlemen as he passed. Indignant at the felonious insulting impudence, one of the gentlemen treated him to a specimen of discipline which he will be apt to remember."[35]

The aforementioned example suggests that Baltimore newspapers' attitude toward slavery was at once idiosyncratic and ambivalent. On one hand, Baltimore newspapers daily ran advertisements for the purchase and sale of slaves. The following advertisement appeared in the *American* under a classified heading which included horses, carriages, and steam engines: "FOR SALE A very fine NEGRO BOY, slave for life; a fine Waiter. Satisfactory reasons given for wishing to dispose of him. Apply at the *American* office."[36] In this case, probably not unusual, the *American* was fully complicit in the transaction by offering its offices as venue for inquiries. The *Sun* ran a standing advertisement for more than two years under the bold-face headline: "NEGROES WANTED."[37] Both the *Sun* and the *Republican* ran advertisements until the beginning of the Civil War, offering rewards ranging from $50 to $200 for the return of runaway slaves. Although formal newspaper advertising standards were nonexistent in the 1840s and 1850s, it is clear that the publishers of Baltimore's daily press went beyond passive toleration of slaveholding by participating actively in its commercial perpetuation.

On the other hand, either reflecting their support for congressional legislation in 1808 and 1820 that prohibited trafficking in human beings off the coast of

34. *American*, March 11, 1853, p. 2. Brown subsequently became mayor of Baltimore in 1860.
35. *Clipper*, June 4, 1850, p. 2
36. *American*, July 6, 1854, p. 3.
37. This ad ran during in 1857 and 1858. Newspaper rates encouraged regular ad insertions by selling "squares"generally six lines by one column for low rates. These ads, called rateholders, remained in the same position on same page day after day, which reduced typesetting costs and makeup problems. Interestingly, the *Sun* regarded direct solicitation of advertising during this period as demeaning and refused to hire salespeople to solicit ads. However, in its columns the *Sun* regularly encouraged advertising based upon the paper's massive circulation numbers. The result was a lower ad/news ratio and more columns of reading material as compared to other dailies.

the United States, or indicative of a change in the public pulse, Baltimore's dailies took an increasingly dim view of the slave trade in the 1850s. A captured British slaver, taken into custody by an American frigate off Jamaica, was described by the *Republican & Argus* as "one of a large number engaged in the detestable slave trade," and the *Patriot* called bluntly upon the government to "enforce the acts suppressing the African Slave Trade."[38] The mercantilist *American and Commercial Advertiser* in 1854 condemned with restrained indignation the lynching in Caroline County of a free black named Dave Thomas. "A mob of some sixty or seventy men broke open the jail and consummated their purpose by hanging the negro. It is to be hoped that this information may be incorrect, and our State preserved from the disgrace of so illegal and unjustifiable an outrage."[39]

However they felt about discussing, or not, the peculiar institution in their midst, Baltimore newspapers' lack of coverage of the national debate over slavery is difficult to fathom. The six newspapers examined here supported the organized and entrenched elements within Baltimore's social, political, and economic power structure, who relied upon the *status quo* for their perpetuation. They did so despite the evidence that Marylanders were clearly troubled by the institution of slavery as seen in the high rate of manumissions in the state. Articles fell into two broad categories: subjects of immediate interest to local citizens and a large body of material generally gleaned from other newspapers across the country and from England.[40] News stories of events posing an immediate and visible threat to the economic and political stability of Baltimore were well covered. In addition the dailies did a good job of covering one-dimensional events such as lectures, civic gatherings, exhibits, and festive events. Reporting was generally straightforward; relatively little space was devoted to contextual supplements and sidebars.[41]

Despite tenacious apathy toward the most contentious issue of the day, events of the late 1850s finally forced the Baltimore daily press to confront the national debate. In 1857 the Supreme Court's Dred Scott decision, written by Maryland native and Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney, offered Baltimore's dailies, in so far as they discussed slavery at all, broad affirmation for their support of states rights. The papers lost no time in expressing their satisfaction. After a brief wire story on the decision on March 7, 1857, the *Sun* waited until the text of the decision was released to run a major, three-column story on page one under two headline decks: "The Chief Justice said, from the best consideration, we have come to the

38. *Republican & Argus*, May 1, 1854, p. 2; *Clipper*, December 3, 1860, p. 2.

39. *American*, October 11, 1854, p. 2.

40. American newspapers were "exchanged" free of postal fees beginning with enactment of the Post Office Act of 1792. This led to widespread use of newsgathering of stories from other cities despite the apparent lack of context and relevance to Baltimore's situation.

41. Sidebars are stories running adjacent to news columns which provide additional information to help readers understand the relevance of important news items.

conclusion that the African race who came to this country, whether free or slave, were not intended to be included in the constitution for the enjoyment of any personal rights or benefits."[42] The *Sun* then unleashed a series of editorials:

> The decision, we are glad to say, seems to be welcomed in most quarters. . . . the *New York Times*, which is a "republican" journal also says: No popular revolution will follow this decision, startling as it will be to the opinions and principles of three-fourths of the people of the United States. *It will be accepted as the authoritative exposition of the Constitution, and regarded by all departments of the government and by the people as the law of the land.*[43]

Thematically, this remained the consistent argument of the *Sun* until the bombardment of Fort Sumter. The *Sun* used the *Times* as an institutional proxy to reify its editorial position, and in a reprise two days later opined: "Our hope and our firm belief is . . . that the patriotic and conservative masses at the North will receive this judgment as the *law of the land* and govern their conduct accordingly."[44] Despite their editorial exultation the *Sun's* editors, to their credit, also ran the full text of the dissent of Justices McLean and Curtis shortly thereafter. The *Exchange* and the *Patriot*, though possessing the advantage of being afternoon publications, ran only short telegraphic dispatches. The *Patriot* ran a two-inch story as the third item on page two beginning: "Judge McLean delivered his views this morning in the Supreme Court," and the *Exchange* ran a similarly abbreviated piece on page three with a dateline of Washington, D.C., that began, "This day, the United States Supreme Court . . . ."[45] Months later, the *Exchange* adopted a tack similar to the *Sun* in a prescient editorial:

> The institution of slavery and the rights of the citizen in view of it, are surely sacred under our laws and constitution. . . . If our laws suffice, let us administer them. If they do not, let us amend them or make new ones. But let us remember that in law only is there right or liberty, and if we place the firebrand in the hands of a mob, to-day, to consume our enemies, we shall have no reason to be surprised if it kindle our own households into conflagration to-morrow.[46]

42. *Sun*, March 10, 1857, p. 1. The "stacking" of headlines on page one was somewhat unusual for the *Sun* in 1857. The practice was initiated to call attention to important stories, and would become more prevalent during the next three years.
43. *Sun*, March 9, 1857, p. 2.
44. *Sun*, March 11, 1857, p. 2.
45. *Patriot*, March 7, 1857, p. 2; *Exchange*, March 7, 1857, p. 3. When comparing the different leads in the *Patriot* and *Exchange* it becomes apparent that there was not a common telegraphic wire dispatch but correspondents for each paper filing independent stories.
46. *Exchange*, July 20, 1858, p. 2.

For its part, the *American* editorialized, "It will put [southern rights] upon safe, solid and conservative ground of Constitutional law as authoritatively defined, whilst it will drive their opponents from behind the shelter of disputed points, and force them to take their position upon the open field of hostility to the Constitution as it now exists." The *Patriot* went one step further, asserting that the decision "demolishes, utterly and forever, the whole programme of the Republican Party."[47]

Although the Baltimore press used Chief Justice Taney's ruling to reify its position advocating sovereign rights of states in dealing with slavery, it also responded to pressure to find viable solutions to the problem. The *Patriot* proposed this conundrum:

> It is the consciousness of numerical inferiority which has led the states bordering on the Gulf Stream and the Mississippi river to advocate acquisition of new territory for the Southland. . . . unless this new and inviting field for slave labor is opened to the South, the latter will be surrounded in the course of a few years with a cordon of free States without any hope of extrication, except by the outlet of Texas, the west portion of which is already tinctured by free soil sentiments.[48]

Responding to a suggestion by the *Charleston (S.C.) Mercury* that border states, including Maryland, might consider dispensing with slave labor as agricultural production shifted to less labor-intensive crops, the *American* declared:

> All we ask is for the busy-bodies of the North not to impede the march of events. These events may be providential as regards the one immortal creature or merely "natural" in the regard of physical laws, as men may happen to think; but we require them to be let alone. Interference retards, without even the promise of good. This is our panacea for slavery, where it is not "necessary"and, when it reaches a point where it is, if such there be, then let it remain. In God's good time he will doubtless find means to remove that which he has at least tolerated, in the good as well as the bad, for four thousand years.[49]

In this instance, the *American* editor presumed divine sanction of the institution of slavery and placed responsibility for its elimination squarely upon its Creator. That might have been more a matter of place rather than logic. Abolitionist argu-

47. *American*, March 9, 1857, p. 2. *Patriot*, March 9, 1857, p. 2.
48. *Patriot*, March 9, 1857, p. 2.
49. *American*, March 9, 1857, p. 2. Interestingly, this ran on the same day as an editorial on the Dred Scott decision.

ments, derived from such concepts as natural rights and moral rectitude, were forcefully promoted by individual New England ministers whose churches were less structured and hierarchical than the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Catholic churches in Baltimore. William Lloyd Garrison, noted editor of the *Liberator* who was briefly imprisoned for libel in Maryland in 1830, submitted only to God's truth and inveighed against slavery based on the theory of common humanity. The *American* suggested that man had no dominion over any dimension of the argument, that in essence the moral position is moot. It was one of the few instances in the debate in which a Baltimore newspaper moved from behind the comfortable legal, constitutional defense of slavery and hid behind a theistic barricade.

Baltimore's dailies regarded the abolitionist press as part of a radical conspiracy centered in New York and Boston. The abolitionist papers, believing change would occur only if the issue was constantly before the public, were relentless in both coverage and tone of their invective. The *Sun* reciprocated when covering the subject:

> The anti-slavery societies hold their anniversaries at this pleasant season, and angry clouds of darkness like Mr. Redmond and Frederick Douglass, cannot hang long in the moral sky of the city Assembly rooms without an explosion. Accordingly last week there was the usual quantity of the electric fluid discharged by these and other black objects, and the peals rumbled for a while along the columns of the Tribune without doing any mischief other than leaving a strong smell of sulphur after the storm, as an even less agreeable odor had preceded it. One of Sydney Smith's best classical bon mots had reference to the impossibility of recognizing negroes as citizens arising from their offence to the olfactories of the white race.[50]

The odium between the abolitionist press and Baltimore's dailies during this era was obvious.

By 1858 coverage and comment on the subject of racial issues had waned in the Baltimore papers. Then in April the *American* revisited the subject in an editorial regarding the status of free blacks. "In New York City . . . as common laborers, or as waiters, they monopolized the wharves, the drays, the hotels and the kitchens. But the sturdier Irish and Germans, who offered themselves for these places, within the last few years, have been readily accepted in their stead because they were able

50. *Sun*, May 19, 1857, p. 2. Charles Lenox Redmond was a free black abolitionist living in Massachusetts, part of a larger group which included Maryland's Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and Frederick Douglass. Sydney Smith, an English clergyman, was known worldwide for his gentle demeanor and dedication to tolerance promoted with literary talent and self-deprecating wit. The *New York Tribune* was on the cutting edge of the abolitionist movement and an intractable opponent of slavery.

to perform their duties with more intelligence, and consequently with more thrift." Counter-intuitive as it sounds, the paper's praise of immigrants reflected moderating tensions in Maryland as the nativist Know-Nothings, finding themselves in power across the state, proved to be less draconian than feared. As for solving the slavery issue, the *American* resurrected Maryland's tired, hapless, and ultimately failed colonization efforts that had begun in the 1830s:

> It is admitted that the emancipation of the slave is not to be effected by abolitionism; yet abolitionism should not be permitted to stifle the cause of *colonization* at the North, in favor of the free colored man. It is this cause one of the very greatest causes of the age that we desire to cherish; and we sincerely hope that both New York and Boston will unite with Maryland in a hearty effort to give those unfortunate blacks who are displaced from the avenue of honest industry, a home in Africa.[51]

Any sense of complacency the press might have felt soon vanished. John Brown's raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry brought the issue of slavery to a sudden boil in the Baltimore press. Baltimore's daily newspapers covered the story in remarkable depth and breadth. On October 18, 1859, the *Exchange* ran nine stacked decks[52] on page one, beginning with dispatches from Frederick and followed by almost hourly telegraphic dispatches datelined chronologically, beginning the previous day from Washington at noon, Monocacy at 1:30 P.M., Richmond at 9 P.M., Monocacy again at 9:30 P.M. and Monocacy Bridge at 11:25 P.M. The *Sun* ran the story on page one under the headline "Slave Insurrection at Harper's Ferry." The story opened with: "We were startled yesterday morning, between nine and ten o'clock, by the receipt of the following telegraphic dispatch . . ."[53] followed by a series of "Further Accounts by Telegraph" and "Latest and Highly Important" stories from various, and sometimes contradictory, sources. Neither the *Sun* nor the *Exchange* made an attempt to sort out fact from rumor, thereby attesting to the confusion that reigned during the first hours.

Yet in the five days following the raid, the newspapers did begin to sort fact from rumor. The *Sun* devoted an unprecedented twenty-six columns and one reporter to the story, and continued to post daily updates until Brown's execution on December 2, 1859. The *American* was equally expansive in its coverage. Both papers showcased the latest in communications technology, including telegraphic

51. *American*, April 19, 1858, p. 2. The reference to New York and Boston reinforces the conclusion that the Baltimore press regarded the center of abolitionist activity as emanating from those two cities.

52. A "deck" is a headline usually separated from either the next "deck" or body copy of a story by a horizontal column rule.

53. *Sun*, October 18, 1857, p. 1.

dispatches from their own reporters. Local correspondents' daily filings and freelance columns were carried by rail from Harpers Ferry to Baltimore. The *Sun* and *American* gave exceptional attention to the John Brown story, including analysis from foreign sources.[54]

The *Republican*, in contrast, was decidedly low-key, with a page three single-column story under the head "Negro Insurrection at Harper's Ferry." The following day the *Republican* made no mention of the raid; the lead story on page one concerned "An Astronomer's Discovery" of a sixteenth-century building on the Island of Veen.

The *Patriot* took a similar approach, reporting the raid in a mere twelve-inch story under the single head: "The Insurrection at Harper's Ferry." The paper made no editorial comment the following day, although it did devote two and one-half columns to the story. On October 19 the *Patriot* began a series picked up from the *New York Herald* entitled "Who is Brown?" Since the *Herald* was a leading abolitionist daily, editor F. S. Evans knew his paper's motives were likely to be questioned, which prompted him to disclaim on page one, "I never was, and am not now, an Abolitionist." That same day a *Patriot* editorial began: "The insane attempt at servile insurrection at Harper's Ferry has been crushed," in an obvious attempt to remove any doubts as to the paper's sympathies.[55] If any Baltimore paper could have been accused of sympathy with Brown's cause, and none could, it would have been the *Clipper,* which published the "Provisional Constitution of John Brown" verbatim on October 20, 1859.

The *Sun* and the *American* clearly established themselves as Baltimore's eminent dailies with their coverage of the John Brown story. In a noticeable departure from past practice, they eschewed news summaries in favor of complete daily reports of the events at Harpers Ferry, including John Brown's trial and execution. The political press was concerned more with the implications of the event and its aftermath. Their editorials concentrated on the emerging Republican Party and its platform.

Editorially, all of Baltimore's newspapers were becoming increasingly concerned by the strains pulling at the fabric of the Union. Baltimore businessmen had some dealings with northern interests but much sentiment was conjoined culturally and economically with the South. The papers adopted a cautionary tone, with notable exceptions. The *Sun* took the position that preservation of the

54. The editor of the *American*, Charles C. Fulton, was traveling in Europe in 1859 and convinced Victor Hugo to submit an essay on John Brown's raid. It was published in the *American* on December 23, 1859.

55. *Patriot*, October 19, 1859, p. 2. There were demonstrations outside the *Patriot's* offices immediately following Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry which may have been politically motivated. It was unusual for an editor to address readers so directly; Evans may have feared for his physical safety.

Union was paramount. An editorial entitled "Conservatism" stated: "In our day the most dangerous topic of national politics is slavery. Not because of slavery *per se* but solely on account of a false issue, raised and constantly agitated in a section of the country where slavery does not exist." The "false issue" was, according to the *Sun*, fomented by a small cadre of fanatics indifferent to preservation of the Union and blind to the constitutional defense of slavery. The next day, in an editorial entitled "The North and The South" the same writer referred to John Brown thus: "Even the John Brown raid, with its preposterous and contemptible *dénouement*, and the ignominious death which avenged the felony of the ringleader, serve only to bring into prominence with vile and insufferable spirit which in its disgusting sympathy with treason and murder, assumes the virtue of philanthropy, but has none of it."[56]

As the sectional crisis worsened, and rhetoric became more heated, Baltimore papers followed the trend. The *Republican* was more willing to fan the flames by suggesting that "every slaver captured by our cruisers shall be carried into some port of New England, and its living cargo be handed over to the *negro-lovers* of that portion of our country, that they may have the special objects of their regard perpetually before them."[57] The *Patriot* noted, in a page one editorial, "We are approaching a crisis in our political affairs . . ." and went on to counsel the Congress to enact a law protecting the rights of southern states. In the absence of such law, the paper suggested that representatives from the south withdraw to Richmond and convene an "independent Southern confederacy."[58] The *Clipper* ran a one-column ad inserted by Henry Fairbanks which began "NEGROES! NEGROES! NEGROES!" and went on to advise that he was purchasing slaves on Green Street immediately opposite the Western Police Station.[59] The *Republican*, in a ranting diatribe, expressed its opposition to the Republican Party by describing its nominating convention in 1860: "Next came the Rail Splitter, the ultra *nigger worshipper*, the union hater, and the irresponsible conflict advocate, with a New England traitor thrown in."[60] The sentiment might be excused as political rhetoric; the word choice is unmistakably hostile. Finally, the *Clipper* openly broached the peril of war in unusually clear prose: "The idea of a peaceful dissolution is fallacious. It cannot be accomplished. Civil war will be the inevitable consequence of a separation of the Southern from the Northern States, and Maryland, above all other states, will be the greatest sufferer from its horrors and devastation."[61]

56. *Sun*, December 7 and 8, 1859, p. 2.
57. *Republican & Argus*, July 2, 1859, p. 2.
58. *Patriot*, December 3, 1859, p. 1.
59. *Clipper*, June 20, 1860, p. 1.
60. *Republican & Argus*, August 23, 1860, p. 2. This comment presumably refers to Lincoln's vice-presidential nominee, Hannibal Hamlin.
61. *Clipper*, January 19, 1861, p. 2.

When war came, the daily press in Baltimore suffered as well. The *Patriot* ceased publishing upon the death of its founder, Isaac Monroe, who died on December 22, 1859. The *Republican, Exchange,* and *Clipper* did not survive the conflict. The *Republican* was taken over by Union troops under General Schenk on September 11, 1863. The *Exchange* was similarly suppressed three days later and returned to the streets on September 19 as the *Maryland Times.* The *Clipper* ceased publication on September 30, 1865, with the death of proprietor William Wailes. The *Sun* and the *American* survived the war. The *American* became an early supporter of the Union cause, and its editor, Charles C. Fulton, accompanied the Army of the Potomac on numerous campaigns. The *Sun* attempted to be relentlessly neutral, reporting on battles with no editorial comment. Although the Lincoln administration periodically sought to shut the paper down, its proprietor, Arunah S. Abell, always managed to stay one step ahead of the military censors.

Until the outbreak of hostilities, the Baltimore daily press continued to see the conflict as one of almost religious fanaticism set against entrenched economic interests. It supported slavery as a legally sanctioned and necessary element of the agricultural heritage of the South and rarely confronted the deeper moral origins and implications of the debate. All Baltimore dailies supported efforts to prevent new slaves from landing on American shores, but none ever suggested emancipation or manumission as a solution. The language of the debate on editorial pages was inflammatory. Until the events of October 17, 1859, Baltimore's daily press never fulfilled its obligation to broadly inform the public of the issues. The fact that two newspapers considered in this study ceased publication with the deaths of their proprietors speaks to the accelerating decline of journalism as a personal instrument. Balanced reporting was extremely rare until John Brown's raid, which became a watershed event for newspapers throughout the United States and particularly in Baltimore. The two Baltimore papers that survived the war displayed both journalistic talent and a commitment to broad, deep coverage of the greatest story since the Mexican War. The events at Harpers Ferry provided the source for institutionalized newsgathering techniques, and the orderly presentation of events accompanied by discussion of their implications, for the first time in the Baltimore press. In that tragedy, the *Sun* and the *American* were at the forefront of event-centered reporting which would become the hallmark of major American daily newspapers for the next one hundred years.

Book Reviews

The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution, 1640–1661. By Carla Gardina Pestana (Harvard University Press, 2004. 226 pages. Appendix, notes, index. Cloth, $49.95.)

Too often colonial historians, particularly those studying the seventeenth century, tend to view the colonies in isolation. It almost seems as if, having decided to cross the Atlantic, the average colonist forgot all about events at home and strode blissfully unaware into the New World wilderness. Lately, this view has begun to change and this study amply demonstrates the many connections that tied English colonies to England. Taking a broad perspective, the author attempts to show how events in England, during the turbulent period of the civil war and protectorate, affected and were perceived in the English colonies, not only those in North America, but in Canada, the Caribbean, and South America. The widening of view beyond continental North America was both refreshing and informative.

The book begins with a review of the extent of English colonization in the New World by 1640 and then explores how each of the colonies reacted to the beginning of the civil war between the king and Parliament. The heart of the book deals with the structural changes made by the commonwealth and protectorate governments and how the colonies reacted and adapted to those policies. These include the religious settlement and the economic changes. The author contrasts the use of terms such as "Free Trade" by both the central government and the colonies and shows they meant very different things. Finally, the book describes how, at the restoration, the Crown rejected the religious settlement but kept most of the economic changes.

For the Maryland reader, the book is a mixed blessing. It is ironic that in a study with such a broad vision, there seems to be a distinct New England bias. At times it seems as if the other colonies are mentioned only as sidelights to what was occurring in New England. Since the 1970s, Chesapeake scholars, particularly Lois Green Carr and Russell Menard, have produced a large body of work specifically on this topic yet they are scarcely mentioned although the author cited older sources on Maryland. There are several places where Maryland incidents are wrongly used as examples for a point the author is making. For example, in attempting to show that "maroonage," the running away of servants and slaves, was one response to an increasingly unfree labor market, the "Rebells and Robbers" who were raiding Maryland cattle in 1647 are reported. However, these men were, as described, rebels who objected to the re-imposition of proprietary rule, not

runaway servants or slaves. They did not flee the province to live in the wilderness but went to a well established Virginia settlement at Chicacoan.

Despite these minor flaws, this is an important book that anyone with an interest in seventeenth-century Maryland or the early colonial period should read. Neither Maryland nor any of the other colonies were isolated outposts as is sometimes depicted. New immigrants were constantly arriving and bringing with them news and current perspectives on that news. This study shows quite clearly the close correspondence between events in England and the colonial reaction to them. It demonstrates how the commonwealth attempted to restrict and regulate the colonies with varying degrees of success. Most importantly, it defines an "Atlantic community" whose members interacted not only with the central power but with each other as well. The concept is well suited to analyzing the English effort at colonization.

Timothy B. Riordan
Historic St.Mary's City

Dear Papa, Dear Charley: The Peregrinations of a Revolutionary Aristocrat, as Told by Charles Carroll of Carrollton and His Father, Charles Carroll of Annapolis, with Sundry Observations on Bastardy, Child-Rearing, Romance, Matrimony, Commerce, Tobacco, Slavery, and the Politics of Revolutionary America. Edited by Ronald Hoffman, Sally D. Mason, and Eleanor S. Darcy. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, the Maryland Historical Society, and the Maryland State Archives, 2001. 1651 pages. Illustrations, notes, appendices, index. 3 Vols., Boxed. Cloth, $100.00.)

For years, students of colonial Maryland history have looked enviously at the colony's southern neighbor, home of Landon Carter's diary and Fithian's journal, to say nothing of the voluminous papers of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, *et al.* But with the publication of three volumes of Carroll family letters, envy must yield to gratitude for this finely edited manuscript collection that will be valued by anyone interested in eighteenth-century Maryland.

The letters gathered in *Dear Papa, Dear Charley* span the years from 1749 to 1782, taking Charley, aka Charles Carroll of Carrollton (CCC), from his early education at the Jesuit College in St. Omer, Flanders, to the death of his father, aka Charles Carroll of Annapolis (CCA). The bulk of the letters are those exchanged between the two men, but correspondents include other family members, business associates, political colleagues, and friends. The volumes also include pertinent documents, such as marriage settlements and family wills, interleaved chronologically where appropriate. The editors have grouped the letters into eight thematic chapters, each with an informative introduction to frame the material

that follows. Extensive appendices include eleven genealogical charts for the various branches of the Carroll family, considerably expanding the material available in *Princes of Ireland, Planters of Maryland.* Seven lists of books, principally owned or desired by Charley, with extensive annotations, will delight bibliophiles, while an equal number of slave inventories, covering the period from 1773 to 1782, make readily available the documents that scholars such as Allan Kulikoff and Jean B. Lee, have previously used in manuscript form to enlarge our understanding of colonial Chesapeake slavery.

The detailed index provides guidance through the volumes for readers primarily interested in specific topics or people. The useful device of indicating in boldface all biographical footnotes enables one quickly to locate that information for individuals encountered elsewhere in the letters (a process that would be made even easier if each volume had its own index, but one cannot have everything, particularly when there are already more than 1600 pages). The biographical notes are extensive and rewarding for many of the men and women who weave in and out of the Carroll story, less ample and informative for others (again, there are limits in length, editorial stamina, and patience on the part of many readers, no doubt). The footnotes trace the elaborately intertwined lives of the Chesapeake elite, provide context for the news that father and son share with one another, and connect the contemporary reader with the material and conceptual world of the eighteenth century.

Given the magnitude of these volumes, it is unlikely that most readers will begin with Charley's first letter home and carry on until the letter written to Wallace, Johnson, and Muir in July 1782 announcing his father's death. On the other hand, this reviewer, attempting to follow a plan of reading short selections of the letters from various time periods, found it extremely difficult to stop reading in one place and start again in another—the letters sweep one away into another world. Most likely it will be a rare reader who finds every topic equally enthralling: one may balk at the detailed accounts of political machinations during the revolutionary years, another at the Carrolls' endless wrangles with their neighbors over property titles and boundary lines, while yet others may find the list of Charley's expenses in Paris and London unnecessary. But anyone with an interest in colonial Chesapeake history will be amply rewarded by even an occasional foray into the Carrolls' lives as revealed by their pens and may discover that even mundane lists have their rewards. Charles Carroll of Carrollton, while in London, paid more for three suits of clothes and a horse than he gave to his servant for a year's wages. It would not be going too far to say that some will find the lists of expenditures (and books) among the most interesting documents included in *Dear Papa, Dear Charley.* Fithian has nothing to match them.

Jean B. Russo
Annapolis

Manufacturing Revolution: The Intellectual Origins of Early American Industry. By Lawrence A. Peskin. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. 294 pages. Notes, essay on sources, index. Cloth, $49.95.)

In his introduction, Lawrence A. Peskin argues, "If this book does nothing else, it will demonstrate that mercantilistic ideas not only survived but flourished in the early United States" (6). The book certainly succeeds on this point and on many more. Peskin provides an engaging, provocative, and persuasive revisionist effort, ably demonstrating how Americans began an intellectual journey in the 1760s that led them to embrace economic independence based ostensibly upon the principles of the British mercantilist system. His thesis represents a radical departure from earlier interpretations of the period that insist Americans turned away in disgust from mercantilism in the Revolution. According to Peskin, "Americans may have fought to free themselves of their subservient position in the British system, but the war did not lead them to reject its underlying principles" (55). Instead, Americans modified commonly accepted mercantilist principles to meet the needs of a newly independent domestic economy. The core tenets of this neomercantilist vision were already apparent within the arguments first pursued by mechanics in the 1760s and later picked up by merchants and others on the eve of the Revolution. "These groups launched a discourse about manufacturing that would continue for decades," according to Peskin, that "helped guide the new nation along the path of economic change" into the 1820s (2). In the carefully argued and well-documented chapters that follow, Peskin traces the eddies and currents of American neomercantilism over a fifty-year period in a succinct and easily accessible style.

The core beliefs of the British system included systematic government planning of the economy, balance of trade in international exchange, and a harmony of interests between agriculture, commerce, and manufacturing. Within the imperial context there was an additional layer whereby "contemporaries assigned specific and nonoverlapping economic roles to the colonies and England" (14). Americans fully accepted their proscribed role within the empire—namely restrictions on manufacturing that required an exclusive focus on agriculture and commerce—until the British began to change their policies in the wake of the Seven Years' War. Critics on both sides of the Atlantic balked at what appeared to be the British government's deliberate efforts to upset the empire's harmony of interests. Throughout the 1760s and into the 1770s, Americans adopted what Peskin describes as an instrumentalist approach that used mercantilist principles to argue against the imperial innovations. After the passage of the Coercive Acts, mechanics and merchants adopted what Peskin describes as a developmental approach that became the "springboard to a new postcolonial economy based on domestic production at least as much as overseas trade" and

agriculture (30). Americans thus adapted the principles of the British system and made it their own.

After the war ended, mechanics once again led the effort to promote manufacturing in the new republic through protectionism. The material successes of these pro-manufacturing boosters were limited during the 1780s, but the mechanic protectionists did achieve "a more coherent political-economic vision of national self-sufficiency" that carried over the pre-war mercantilist arguments for a balanced economy and laid the groundwork for the next major push for industrialization (65). During the 1790s, merchant-manufacturers moved to the fore of the pro-manufacturing movement, replacing the increasingly divided mechanic community. The new leadership also pursued a balanced economy by promoting Manufacturing Societies and Agricultural Societies simultaneously. However, the merchant-manufacturers also embraced far more grandiose schemes, emphasized the importance of banks, internal improvements and mechanization, and did not rely as much on protectionism. As in the previous decade, the most important product of their various efforts was promotional, "the manufacturing societies proved less adept at making textiles than at spinning rhetoric" (112). Yet this rhetoric was crucial, because it changed the language of manufacturing from traditional artisan production towards mechanized factory work. For Peskin, "this was a new paradigm for manufacturing, and although it had not proven itself in the marketplace in the 1790s, it had begun to insinuate itself into the national consciousness" (114).

In the early nineteenth century, the pro-manufacturing movement diverged along two distinct models, the proprietary capitalist model that dominated in Philadelphia and Baltimore until 1810, and the corporate capitalist model, that dominated in Boston, New York, and Baltimore after 1810. The former championed niche producers and kept the earlier spirit of boosterism alive. The latter, for which the key development was the incorporation movement, ironically removed much of the debate over manufacturing from the public sphere. If either the Federalist or Republican parties had remained steady and unabashed supporters of manufacturing throughout the period, it may have been possible to keep more of the discussion over manufacturing in the public sphere. As Peskin shows, however, the pro-manufacturing movement had allies and enemies in both parties, and neither party could ever muster a consistent public approach towards manufacturing. Thus "manufacturing was becoming more elitist" just when "American politics was democratizing." Both proprietary and corporate capitalists remained true to the principles of a balanced economy, and in this way, "a half century of pro-manufacturing rhetoric did bear fruit, even if some of it might have tasted bitter to those who had planted the first seeds" (187).

The core of the pro-manufacturing philosophy from the 1760s remained essentially unchanged for the politicians who fought for protectionist measures in

1816, 1820, 1824, and 1828. Yet growing class divisions and sectionalism in the republic created new divisions within society that rendered the earlier neomercantilist concepts over a balance of interests somewhat archaic. Yet Peskin believes enough of the old arguments survived whereby "the emerging American system, the heart of Whig ideology, was the culmination of the discourse colonial mechanics began during the unrest of the 1760s" (221). The pro-manufacturing rhetoric of the Revolutionary era cast a long shadow indeed.

Students of Maryland history will especially appreciate Peskin's close attention to manufacturing efforts in Maryland generally and Baltimore specifically. The analysis goes well beyond the obligatory mention of Hezekiah Niles, and places the Monumental City on an even footing, at least most of the time, with New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. If there is a fault with the book, it is that the pro-manufacturing movement is traced primarily through these four cities, thus leaving aside most of the South from the discussion. Beyond this criticism, which may be leveled against most histories of American industrialization, Peskin's achievement is impressive, and a worthy volume to inaugurate the Johns Hopkins University Press's Series on Early American Economy and Society.

Richard Chew
Virginia State University

The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia. By Claude A. Clegg III (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004, 342 pages. Notes and Index. Cloth, $55.00; Paper $19.95.)

Its title notwithstanding, this book is emphatically a study of North Carolina's role in the colonization movement, spanning its inception in the wake of the American Revolution until the twentieth century. As such, the book is a valuable contribution to the field. It gathers disparate sources in a clear and useful manner with details that will be new and interesting to most readers.

To summarize, Clegg recounts the origins of the colonization movement in the American colonies and subsequently in the new United States, particularly North Carolina. He explains that Quakers concentrated in the northeastern counties of the state were the earliest and strongest advocates of resettlement in Africa. Quakers in the South were slower than northern Friends to affirm the moral wrong of slavery. In fact, many of them in North Carolina owned slaves in the late eighteenth century, even as their community gradually achieved consensus on the ideal of universal liberty and equality regardless of race. Unfortunately, they were unable simply to free their human property as the laws of North Carolina would not permit such actions without substantial effort and expense. What is more, Quakers had the mortifying experience of seeing some of their freedmen seized and sold back into servitude by state authorities. As a result, they continued to

own slaves in point of law, though they regarded them as free within their community. The author does not inform us of the exact nature of this freedom, however, perhaps because of a lack of documents. Probably it varied according to the personal relationships of the individuals involved. Few or none of these quasi-free African Americans joined their masters' meetings for worship. Again the author does not tell us whether this was because of distinctive religious culture among black people or because white Quakers would not accept them, though he appears to believe the latter.

When Liberia was created in 1822, Quakers hoped that their slaves could find a new home. They actively promoted colonization and helped to send a few hundred of their freedmen to Africa in the nine years following. The results were rather disappointing. The American Colonization Society proved unable to provide for settlers as promised. Nearly a quarter of the emigrants died within two years of arrival in Liberia. By the time of Nat Turner's rebellion in August, 1831, African colonization had lost its appeal for North Carolina Friends. In contrast, Turner launched a stampede of interest among non-Quaker slaveholders who blamed idle slaves and free blacks for the unrest. Hundreds of African Americans were hurried aboard ships bound for Africa in the months following, but interest subsided as the bloody August of 1831 passed into history. Thereafter, colonization in North Carolina experienced occasional small revivals into the late nineteenth-century. The author details those efforts with great care and draws a connection to current events.

Clegg makes some effort to delineate the Liberian settler society and the impact of North Carolinians upon it. In this his report is adequate, though he overemphasizes the chronic demographic crisis endured by the settler community, particularly in the outlying agricultural settlements. He discusses at length the paradoxical and often violent relations between the settlers and the Africans among whom they settled and portrays a process of robbery and disenfranchisement closely paralleling the United States experience with its Native American population. The actual history is a far more complex tapestry of economic, social, and political motives and interactions—far more than a few brief chapters could cover. Somehow (and the book doesn't make this very clear) a lively Americo-Liberian Society did develop and North Carolinians played a significant role in it. The uninitiated reader would be left with a much more negative impression.

The Price of Liberty provides a clear and concise statement of the role of North Carolina in the colonization movement that may be contrasted with the very different experience of Maryland. Neither state sent enough emigrants to Liberia to make any serious impact on the numbers of black people remaining in the United States. North Carolina sent more than 2,000 before 1845 while Marylanders comprised less than half that number. Even so, Maryland's experience with colonization was much more significant. Marylanders settled their own colony in

Africa. It briefly became an independent state in 1854, before uniting with the Republic of Liberia in 1857. In Maryland itself, the colonization movement was far more public and energetic. Funded by the state government, it boasted a powerful propaganda and infrastructure for its dissemination. Black Marylanders largely rejected the suggestion that they belonged in Africa, and most white Marylanders were either indifferent or opposed the policy. Colonization stoked a heated debate over the role of black people in American society. Such a debate could not have occurred publicly in such southern states as North Carolina. Ironically, in its failure, colonization gave rise to "Pan-Africanism" and more modern "Afrocentrism" that celebrated a universal African nationality.

The inability of black American settlers to get along with their African neighbors is a tragedy that has transcended generations of cultural evolution until the present day, a point that Clegg makes very clear in his book. The unfolding of this unhappy story in the present day informs the author's judgment of historical events. Perhaps the most insidious pitfall confronting all historians is the temptation to judge the past in terms of the present, assuming that the participants had benefit of our evolved cultural values and knowledge of what would happen later. I find this troubling attitude scattered throughout the book in a number of ways. The author sharply criticizes Friends for having slaves in the first place and not freeing them sooner. He portrays settlers as the agents of an imperial venture trampling poor unsophisticated Africans. White colonizationists appear only as cynical advocates of a scheme to dump a dangerous underclass overseas and thus secure the value of slaves and the safety of the slave power. In reality, all of these individuals were products of their times and their motives were far more complex and variable. Further, we are able to judge them within the context of their culture and age and to take a measure of their faults and virtues. This is far more interesting and relevant than to imply malice or stupidity because they did not share the same world view as we. If the reader bears this in mind, he will still find a wealth of well-researched detail and pieces of great insight.

Richard L. Hall
College Park, Maryland

Halls of Honor: College Men in the Old South. By Robert F. Pace. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004. 164 pages. Notes, index. Cloth. $34.95.)

Robert F. Pace approaches the subject of antebellum southern colleges from the perspective of the students. He follows the young men as they negotiated the perils of nineteenth-century travel to reach the colleges and as they adjusted to living in a dormitory or boarding-house, eating bad food in communal dining rooms, and managing their spending money. Their studies also proved challenging and some responded to academic difficulties by ridiculing and defying the

faculty or by cheating. Yet many students studied hard and respected the professors for their erudition. When not studying, students indulged in the whole range of recreational activities available to young white men—hunting, dancing, horse racing, drinking, smoking, gambling, and chasing women. Debating societies occupied much of students' free time; these societies developed oratorical skills and forged social bonds. Despite their finely honed debating skills, students often turned to violence to resolve conflicts. Several armed rebellions occurred at southern colleges, and the young men fought townspeople and each other with fists, knives, and pistols. During the Civil War, most colleges closed as students left to fight for the Confederacy. Some remained open by transforming themselves into military academies and a few even admitted women.

According to Pace, two forces shaped student life: adolescence and the code of honor. The challenges of college life helped boys make the transition to adulthood and students' behavior reflected their efforts to make that transition. Often, they behaved like children, longing for the comforts of home and making questionable use of their freedom from parental control. At other times, they claimed the privileges of adults and became angry when the faculty treated them like children. Being an adult white man in the antebellum South, of course, meant being a man of honor. Pace contends that the code of honor, which he defines as an overriding concern with public image, explains much of student behavior. Through their studies, debating societies, and social relationships, students developed their own honor-based culture and defended their reputations as men of honor. The importance of image explains students' academic drive, their concern with their physical appearance, and their propensity for violence.

Halls of Honor succeeds well in conveying the experiences of college men in the antebellum South. Pace's account of student culture ranges across the region, from St. Mary's College in Maryland to Austin College in Texas. Most previous studies have focused on a single institution. He argues convincingly that southern students prized academic achievement, an aspect of college life often overlooked by other scholars. Whereas most scholars have considered student honor only in the context of rebellions, Pace rightly points out that the code of honor shaped students' day-to-day lives as well.

Pace's efforts to explain students' behavior and to place college life in the broader context of antebellum southern society are intriguing but not entirely satisfying. By reducing the complex concept of honor to a concern with public image, Pace leaves many unanswered questions about how the code of honor influenced student behavior. For instance, he clearly demonstrates that students worried about the image they presented to their classmates and to the public. However, he does not examine the nature of this image that young men felt so compelled to maintain in order to preserve their honor.

The author's focus on adolescence and honor excludes other social and cul-

tural influences on young men of the antebellum South. Strangely, the role of religion receives only passing mention, even though most students attended daily prayer services and heard sermons every Sunday in the college chapel. In his discussion of academics, Pace suggests that students took their education seriously because they believed that failure at recitations or public examinations threatened their honor. Although he shows that students worried about their scholastic performance and occasionally lashed out when professors challenged their claims to academic prowess, he provides little evidence that students linked academic achievement with honor or felt shame when they failed in their studies. Elite southerners valued education as a marker of class and gender identity, as a quality in political leaders, and as a means of strengthening Christianity, yet Pace attributes the importance of education entirely to the code of honor.

Filled with entertaining anecdotes, *Halls of Honor* is an enjoyable introduction to the world of male college students in the South before and during the Civil War. By introducing us to this world and by raising intriguing questions about the role of honor in student life, Pace has made a valuable contribution to the study of southern education.

Evelyn D. Causey
University of Delaware

Women at the Front: Hospital Workers in Civil War America. By Jane E. Schultz. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004. 374 pages. Appendix, notes, index. Cloth, $34.95.)

During the Civil War, more than 21,000 northern and an indeterminable number of southern women served as nurses, cooks, laundresses, and other types of relief workers. Motivated "variously by patriotism, self-sacrifice, the prospect of adventure, and, of course, money," (47) they came from diverse backgrounds. They were "adolescent slaves, Catholic sisters, elite slaveholders, free African Americans, abandoned wives, and farm women" (12). To tell their stories, Jane E. Schultz has done an amazing amount of research in a vast array of sources. Where possible she provides numbers, but her compelling account of these women rests primarily on her insightful reading of memoirs, letters, and other literary sources. Schultz does not focus on the tasks female relief workers performed; rather, she explores what they thought at each stage of their careers, a far more difficult and rewarding approach.

Once female relief workers made their way to the camps and hospitals, they had to steel themselves for the bloody, demanding, and often dangerous jobs they performed. Despite their "domestic discomfort, less-than-cordial relations with hospital administrators, and frequent physical isolation from other women," hos-

pital workers stayed, not only for the pay but because an initial "patriotic ardor" gave way to a new sense of "vocation" (108). They saw themselves as an integral part of the hospital staff and these "previously inexperienced women gained personal confidence as they grew into positions of responsibility" (108). Female relief workers even confronted surgeons and ward masters over corruption within the hospital system and proper care for its patients. Nurses formed intense bonds with the soldiers under their care, bonds that transcended race and class, even as their more tenuous relationships with the surgeons and their fellow workers who were African American demonstrated the persistence of class and racial divisions. After the war, some female relief workers turned to teaching, writing, or reform work and many others went back to their homes and resumed roles traditional for women. In the North, nurses campaigned for and, in 1892 finally secured, federal pensions, although cooks and laundresses did not receive them. By that time, female hospital workers had also established a "triumphal" (239) historical narrative of their experience, one in which everyone was brave and triumphed over corruption and other challenges.

Schultz ends with an ambivalent conclusion on perhaps her books' central theme, how being at the front changed the women involved and their culture's conceptions of womanhood. Hospital workers, she concludes "tested the boundaries of race, of class, and of gender in their interactions with soldiers, coworkers, and medical superiors," but in the end these "moments of connection could not . . . dismantle social habits whose continuation were the unquestioned prize of peacetime" (245). Scholars have devoted considerable attention to the question of the Civil War's impact on gender roles without reaching agreement. Schultz's study provides substantial support for those who have argued for the important but ultimately transitory impact of the war. *Women at the Front*, though, offers other important insights and will appeal to readers with various interests. Those interested in military history will learn more about the Civil War hospital system and develop a renewed appreciation for the bonds formed between soldiers and civilians in wartime. Those who study the memory of the Civil War will profit from a new perspective on that much-studied topic. Anyone interested in northern attitudes toward African Americans, an issue of considerable importance in understanding postwar politics and sectional reconciliation, will see how northern racism persisted, in very subtle ways, during and after the war. And students of the South will find that the experience of southern nurses paralleled that of northern ones, as Schultz's argues, but also differed in important ways. To take one example, female groups in the North worked to honor wartime nurses with pensions. "Comparable Southern groups invested their energies in monument and asylum building but took no formal political action to relieve Confederate nurses in need," an agenda that suggests southerners differed from northerners in their attitudes toward the rights and roles of women (185). Such insights into the

nature of southern and northern culture, gender roles, and the memory of the war embedded in a history of a fascinating group of women make Schultz's book a major scholarly contribution.

GAINES M. FOSTER
Louisiana State University

A Vision for Girls: Gender, Education, and Bryn Mawr School. By Andrea Hamilton. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004. 256 pages. Index. Cloth, $34.95.)

Andrea Hamilton's *A Vision for Girls* is an objective and fair history of Baltimore's Bryn Mawr School. BMS merits this study (and was chosen by Hamilton) because it was "the first exclusively college-preparatory school for girls in the United States"(3). Were it not for the misguided fuss the school's administration made several years ago, this warts and all study would more quickly have assumed its rightful place as a modest institutional history that, while it breaks some new ground by focusing on the world of private schools, suffers from being too internally driven and often lacking a larger context.

Prior to *A Vision for Girls*, little scholarly attention had been focused on independent schools in the United States. Where such histories exist, they are usually "official" histories, commissioned by the school, generally on the occasion of a major anniversary. Hamilton's work is different. Though it is clearly a dissertation topic revised into a tidy first book, its contributions are more significant. Through *A Vision for Girls*, Hamilton advances the history of education, women's history, and, to a lesser degree, Baltimore history.

Hamilton powerfully shows that in its founding, and for its early decades, BMS was a place of radical innovation, evident in its personnel, curriculum, and even its architecture. Then, struggling for community acceptance and survival, Hamilton reports that the BMS consciously remade itself into the new "country school" model in which recently suburbanized affluent, white, Protestant families enrolled their children. For a period, innovation largely ceased.

While her synopsis appears accurate, Hamilton's understanding of institutional life cycles, like her understanding of local history, seems limited. No organization, no matter how edgy at its inception, can remain so forever. The fact that the leaders of BMS chose survival over constant innovation seems a predictable path and one that should not be interpreted as negating the radicalism of its founding.

For readers who know about local history, Hamilton's lack of awareness of Baltimore's past is an unfortunate distraction. For example, when she refers to BMS's Melrose Avenue campus as being "in the county"(108) in 1928, one wants to

remind her that at the time of the last annexation in 1918, BMS's country campus was encompassed within the city limits. Though she briefly describes Gilman School and the Roland Park Country School, it is too bad that her study does not include more comparative work. This lack is especially apparent when she describes how increased local private school competition challenged BMS without telling the readers very much about the competitors (99, 118).

Hamilton presents a balanced portrait of racial and religious policies at BMS. Her descriptions of the ultimate inclusion of Jews and blacks is interesting and enlightening, as is the story of the role BMS personnel played in the founding of initiatives such as the Baltimore Education Scholarship Trust. If there's any criticism here, it's only that one wishes to know more: who (besides Sophie Szold) were the early Jews and students of color? What are their stories? But the too heavy reliance on the BMS archives, here as throughout this study, simply does not afford those insights.

In summary, *A Vision for Girls* delivers what it promises, a succinct account of the institutional history of the Bryn Mawr School. It does that even-handedly and provides a workable model for the next scholars who will delve into the world of independent school history.

Jessica Elfenbein
University of Baltimore

A Time to Every Purpose: The Four Seasons in American Culture. By Michael Kammen. (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004. 400 pages. Notes, index, color photographs. Cloth, $39.95)

This cultural survey, based on a humanities course taught by the author at Cornell University, studies our fascination with the seasons and how we see ourselves in relation to them as reflected in art, literature, and (minimally) music. It also examines the peculiarly American belief that the seasons and seasonal change are more spectacular in the United States than elsewhere in the world.

The first chapter traces the roots of this fascination in world civilization, including Asian culture. The seasons are as variable in Japan and most of China as they are in Western Europe and the United States. During the Tang era (618–906 A.D.) of Chinese history, seasonal poetry flourished and an elaborate tradition of four seasons art on scrolls and screens, bowls and vases, developed in China and Japan. The Bible, with its origins in the ancient Near East also abounds in seasonal references, but its associations differ slightly from the prevailing American ones—harvest was associated with summer, and rain with winter.

In English the names of the four seasons did not crystallize until the sixteenth century. Although *winter* and "*somer*" are original to the language, "*somer*" was frequently used in reference to spring as well. The other two seasons, *lenten*

and *hoerfest* ("harvest") in medieval times, were replaced by "spring" from the metaphor of "spring of the leaf," and "autumn" from an Old French word that Chaucer saw fit to borrow.

The book's crowning glory is its center section of forty-eight plates in dazzling color that include four seasons perfume bottles, Roman floor mosaics, Chagall's Four Seasons mosaic in downtown Chicago, sculpture (of the New York Appellate Court House and the Fountain of the Four Seasons at the University of Iowa), and paintings by Charles Burchfield, Norman Rockwell, George Wesley Bellows, Marsden Hartley, Jasper Cropsey and Paul Cadmus.

The seasonal lithographs of Nathaniel Currier and James Ives reached their apogee of popularity in the years following the Civil War. The most widely circulated of their seasonal sets was *American Homestead: Winter, Spring, Summer, and Autumn* whose rustic, nostalgic, and nationalistic motifs decorated countless middle- and working-class homes and provided relief from the rigors of daily life and the memories of the recent war.

From the 1940s until the later 1970s a notable generation of nature writers produced an astonishing number and variety of four seasons books. These writers include Aldo Leopold, Joseph Wood Krutch, Donald Culross Peattie, Edwin Way Teale, Hal Borland and Rachel Carson, whose commentaries appeared in mass-circulation magazines such as *Reader's Digest* and *Family Circle*. Carson, who was born near Pittsburgh but educated at Johns Hopkins, began her writing career with a book on the seasonal change of Atlantic marine life and hit her stride with *Silent Spring* (1962) that in no small way helped to create ecological consciousness in the United States. In his treatment of these nature writers, Kammen makes ample and effective use of letters to the authors of the surviving works.

In addition to the Maryland years of Rachel Carson, references to Marylanders are pretty much limited to Frederick Douglass (who avowed never to have met a slave who could tell his own birthday and claimed that they "seldom come nearer to it than planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, spring-time, or fall-time") and Maryland-born but Philadelphia-based Charles Willson Peale. Although Kammen mentions photographers such as Alfred Stieglitz who were fascinated with cityscapes undergoing seasonal change, the name of *Baltimore Sun* photojournalist Aubrey Bodine is not among them.

The Confederacy, on the other hand, gets its due in Kammen's discussion of the four seasonal murals of the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond by French artist Charles Hoffbauer. Spring typifies the early successes of the Confederacy and features Stonewall Jackson reviewing his troops in the Shenandoah Valley. Summer, the most familiar of the four, shows Robert E. Lee astride Traveller with his generals in 1862–63. Fall represents 1864, after some major defeats but a time when the valor of J. E. B. Stuart still is a source of pride. Winter predictably is the grimmest mural amid a scene of snow and utter defeat.

This volume by a seasoned cultural historian, with more than twenty books to his credit, is a joy to skim and to scan, and a persuasive reason to reflect upon important facets of our cultural inheritance that might otherwise have been passed over.

JACK SHREVE
Allegany College of Maryland

Governance of Teaching Hospitals. By John A. Kastor, M.D. (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004. 368 pages. Cloth, $55.00.)

This is an investigational study of the events that led up to fundamental changes in the governance structure of two prestigious academic medical centers, the University of Pennsylvania and the Johns Hopkins University, during the last decade. The text is authored by John Kastor, a professor of Medicine at the University of Maryland, and provides a chronicle of these events for review and insight. Kastor met with 317 faculty and executives associated with these institutions and recorded their recollection of the chronological events and their opinions and explanations of the events from a personal, political, and financial point of view. These opinions were then used to form the basis for understanding and recreating the history and complexity of the academic environment, the events leading up to the critical point of change, and the roles of the principal leaders and governance boards in that change.

The initial section of the book focuses on the relationship between the president of the University of Pennsylvania, Judith Roden, and the dean and chief executive officer, Bill Kelley. The author concludes that Kelley was largely very successful but unable to establish a working relationship with Roden, and that this failure precipitated change. In the end Penn lost a strong academic leader in Kelley but retained its original merged governance structure which suggests that personalities and money were the driving forces. At the Johns Hopkins University, a similar flaw in the relationship between two dean and chief executive officer pairs, Richard Ross and Robert Heyssel, followed by Michael Johns and James Block, led to the change. Although similar in some respects, this situation was different from Penn in that the Hopkins governance boards were heavily involved in the events. These events led to a major change in structure by merging the two offices, but also with the loss of several strong academic leaders.

Although one wonders if it will ever be possible to trace the exact state of circumstances in these complex events, the book closes with a set of conclusions drawn by the author. In this fifteen-page analysis, he compares and contrasts the reasons for change between the two institutions and raises a number of questions. Is the primary determinant for academic health center success based upon the degree of harmonious leadership or upon other factors such as financial status,

governmental structure, quality of the decision making etc? Dr. Kastor makes a strong argument supporting the idea that the harmony and shared vision among leaders is, by far, the more important. What are the best ingredients for a successful governing board of a medical school and university hospital? The author suggests that individuals with broad experience in academic healthcare, not just individuals experienced in the world of business, law, and finance, are a critical ingredient. Only leaders from other academic health centers can supply the crucial understanding of the complexities of medicine to a board. Kastor makes a strong argument that omission of this kind of individual from the JHU and Penn boards was a critical omission that might have avoided many of the problems.

Does any single individual have the required skills to manage both an academic hospital and medical school simultaneously? He cites several examples of where this has been or currently is successful. However, he provides a convincing, somewhat pessimistic, point of view that there are few qualified physicians for this impossible task. In the end, Kastor concludes that the success of an academic health center is more dependent upon the quality of its faculty and leaders than it is upon its governance structure, and that a supportive board of trustees is extremely important for that relationship to be effective. If true, one wonders if the events and their huge expense in money and time at both institutions could have been prevented.

This is a stimulating text, scattered with many insightful quotes from business and academic leaders that are worthy of study both as they relate to Penn and JHU as well as to all academic health science centers. The text provides insight into cataclysmic change brought about when the academic mission of a medical school is threatened. It could have destroyed the fabric of the institutions. It will challenge your views. I recommend it highly to anyone who is in the academic medical field.

Bruce Jarrell
University of Maryland Medical School

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

John D. Krugler makes a persuasive case in the Fall 2004 *MdHM* that the Catholic Calverts made an under-appreciated contribution to the advancement of religious liberty. But he goes too far in arguing that they sought to remove religion from the public realm entirely.

The Act Concerning Religion that Lord Baltimore had the General Assembly pass in 1649 offered religious freedom only to "persons . . . Professing to believe in Jesus Christ." It declares in its first clause that "death and confiscation or forfeiture of all his or her lands and goods" shall be punishment for any citizen who "shall from henceforth blaspheme God, that is Curse him or deny our Savior Jesus Christ to bee the sonne of God, or shall deny the Holy Trinity, the Father, sonne, and holy Ghost."

To Jews, free thinkers, or atheists, the "Calvert vision" posed an explicit death threat—a fact customarily ignored by those who claim Lord Baltimore as a founder of toleration in America.

Charles B. Saunders Jr.
Bethesda, Maryland

Author's Response:

The letter writer raises a valid, if ancient, question. Did the protection of the Act Concerning Religion extend to Jews, free thinkers, and atheists? The language of this law has led others to suggest that religious freedom/liberty of conscience was less than universal. I did not specifically address this issue, but, perhaps, should have in "An 'Ungracious Silence'." The question raises another, namely, was the restrictive language part of the Calvert vision?

It is true, the language cited in the letter is repressive and potentially ominous for Jews, free thinkers, and atheists. But did it pose an "explicit death threat?" The language of a law does not always reflect its enforcement. Look at the laws passed by Congress (Civil Rights Acts of 1866 and 1875) and the Constitutional Amendments (Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth) ratified by the states during Reconstruction (1865–1877). Reading only the legislation and amendments might lead to the conclusion that the freed enslaved African Americans enjoyed all the benefits of citizenship in the United States. In practice, nothing could have been further from the truth. In seventeenth-century Maryland, the language of the 1649 law must be viewed in the context of its implementation.

Examples involving identifiable Jews, free thinkers, and atheists are few and far between. The two best-known cases occurred during the tumultuous 1650s, a period in which Cecil, the second Lord Baltimore exercised little control over

events in his colony. Neither case, that of Councillor William Mitchell, an atheist, nor that of Jacob Lumbrozo, a Jewish doctor, put the defendant's life in peril.

In 1652 the government convicted William Mitchell of, among other things, atheism. This case's context is important. Baltimore appointed Mitchell to the Maryland Privy Council on March 4, 1649/50, stating that he had "good experience of his abilities and faithfulness." Mitchell's demand a year later for 2,200 acres of land for transporting twenty-two servants to Maryland no doubt explains his appointment to the Council. Mitchell was trouble from the beginning, frequently suing and being sued over debts and servants. The most notorious case involved his servant Susan Warren, whom he impregnated. In June 1651 she sought the government's intervention and compensation from Mitchell's estate. Mitchell attempted to force an abortion by making Warren drink a "physic." Robert Brooke, a prominent Protestant and one of only two councillors retained by the Parliamentary commissioners when they asserted their authority over Maryland, signed the warrant that charged Mitchell with "Murther, Atheisme, and Blasphemy." Protestant Attorney General Thomas Hatton stated that he had never known of so many and so heinous crimes. He wondered how Lord Baltimore could have been so deceived by Mitchell that he appointed him "here in a seat of Judicature."A jury found Mitchell guilty of atheism, adultery, the attempted murder of his child in Warren's womb, and fornication. "In the name of the Keepers of the Liberties of England by the Authority of Parliament" Hatton charged Warren with adultery or fornication with Mitchell. She confessed, received a whipping (thirty-nine lashes on her bare back), and was freed from imprisonment. The court did, significantly, free her from any further service to Mitchell. Three matters are noteworthy: One, only the first charge, atheism, involved the matter of religious doctrine; two, the entire matter was adjudicated by Protestants who acted under the authority of Parliament, and three, Mitchell did not lose his civil rights but continued to sue and be sued in Maryland courts. The Mitchell fiasco may have had a progressive side to it. Servants, as a class, in the seventeenth century had few rights and were frequently abused. Warren's eventual release from service to a reprobate master demonstrated the government's willingness (although their method was harsh) to protect a woman servant.

By 1658 the absentee Baltimore had reestablished some semblance of authority in his colony. His zealous Attorney General, a Protestant named Henry Coursey, charged some Quakers, a Catholic priest, and Jacob Lumbrozo with various crimes under the 1649 Act. He charged Lumbrozo with blasphemy for words he had uttered against "Our Blessed Savior Jesus Christ." Testimony indicated that Lumbrozo had been baited and that his explanations of the Resurrection (Jesus' disciples stole him away) and Jesus' miracles (attributed to necromancy or sorcery) left him vulnerable. Based on this testimony, the councillors remanded him to custody of the sheriff. However, a general pardon issued soon after by Gover-

nor Josias Fendall in the proprietor's name, which honored the accession of Richard Cromwell as Lord Protector of England (1658), spared Lumbrozo a trial and the government the possible embarrassment of convicting someone for their beliefs. Although Jews were not explicitly protected by the Act Concerning Religion, the disposition of the case reflected the generally open religious climate that marked much of seventeenth-century Maryland. His arrest apparently had no lasting effect, for Lumbrozo gained acceptance and enjoyed limited prosperity.

Was the restrictive language of the 1649 Act part of the Maryland vision? The draft of the law sent by Baltimore no longer exists. Would he, given his general demeanor, have used such language? It was one thing to ensure that those believing in Jesus Christ would not be disadvantaged in the exercise of his civil liberties; it was another thing altogether to impose a death penalty for blasphemy. That part of the 1649 Act is more consistent with the words and deeds of Virginia Puritans and English Protestants (case in point, the restrictive 1654 Act Concerning Religion). This, of course, is supposition. This much is clear, however: the Act passed in 1649 was not Baltimore's alone. It reflected the views of the freemen as well. It is also clear—witness the appointment of a Protestant governor and council in 1648 and 1649—that religious affiliation did not sway Cecil Calvert. His concern was their commitment to him as a proprietor and their loyalty to his proprietorship.

Did he welcome Jews, free thinkers, and atheists to his colony (beyond William Mitchell)? One example must suffice. Soon after his son Charles became governor, Cecil seemingly scandalized him by recommending a surgeon whom he sent to the colony. Charles dutifully received the surgeon into his home, only to find him lacking in those things his father had recommended. He was, the son reported, "an indifferent good Chirurgeon & as indifferent in his religion." Charles believed that he was little better than an atheist and noted that some called him the "Heathen doctor."

More than anything, the second Lord Baltimore desired peace and stability within his domain. This was the sine qua non of his prosperity and the prosperity and well-being of those who ventured to Maryland. Freedom of conscience was the only way he could assure English Catholics that they could worship with relative freedom in Maryland. These ends were not incompatible with his progressive personality. In an age that demanded uniformity, he seemed willing to work with all comers regardless of their religious commitments. The second Lord Baltimore implemented the Calvert vision in the face of great hardship. Did he achieve a perfect solution? Perhaps not, but the language of the 1649 Act notwithstanding, the few Jews, free thinkers, and atheists in Maryland during his long tenure did not suffer for their beliefs.

John D. Krugler
Marquette University

Notices

Marion Brewington Essay Contest

The Maryland Historical Society's Maritime Committee has established the annual Marion Brewington Essay Prize to encourage research and publication on all aspects of maritime history on Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The prize is named for the former MdHS Curator Marion Brewington to honor his dedication in documenting and preserving the maritime history of the Chesapeake region.

The committee will award $1,000 for the best qualifying manuscript on an aspect of the history of seafaring, fisheries, commerce, warfare or recreational boating on Chesapeake Bay and it tributaries. Manuscripts should be submitted to the Maryland Historical Society by January 31 for consideration of work completed in the previous year. The essays will be considered by the Maritime Committee and judged according to their breadth of research, historical accuracy, and stylistic quality. The winning article will be published in the *Maryland Historical Magazine.*

Authors should follow editorial guidelines as published in the University of Chicago Manual of Style. The essay's length should be no more than 30 double-spaced type-written pages, including endnotes. Authors should submit two hard copies of their manuscripts as well an electronic version on a 3.5 diskette or compact disk in machine-readable software, such as Microsoft or Word Perfect. If the manuscript deals with maritime art or artifacts, it should be accompanied by appropriate illustrations and descriptive captions. If these illustrations are available in the collections of the Maryland Historical Society, the society will provide a select number of illustrations. Authors should submit their manuscripts to: Chair, Maritime Committee, Maryland Historical Society, 201 West Monument Street, Baltimore, MD 21201.

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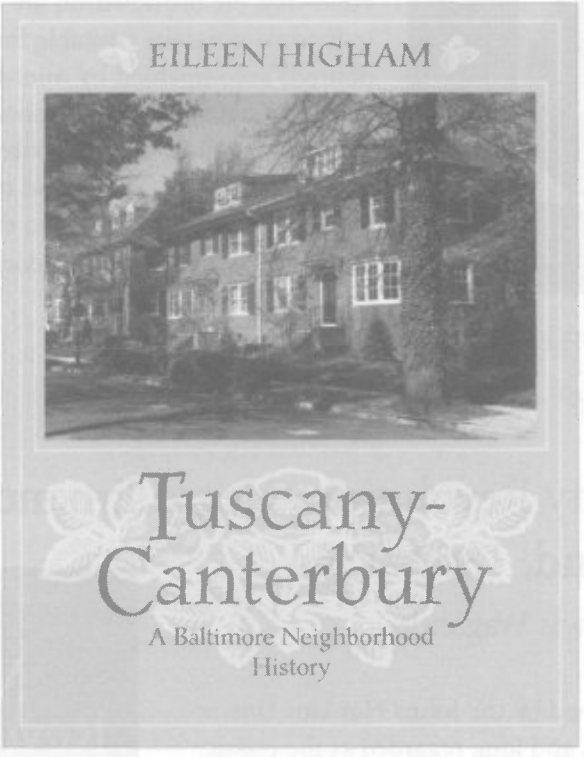
New from the MdHS Press!

Tuscany-Canterbury

A Baltimore Neighborhood History

EILEEN HIGHAM



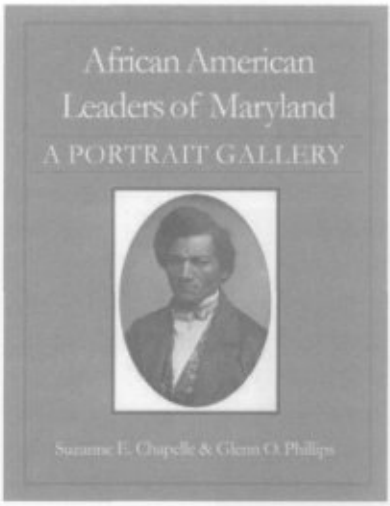
Spanning the whole history of Tuscany-Canterbury, Eileen Higham's long-awaited book ranges from Lord Baltimore's grant to the Merryman family in 1688 to the neighborhood's designation as Historic District in 2001. Here is the richly illustrated story of transformation from wilderness to farm to country homes, elegant mansions, suburb, and urban fringe.

124 pages; illustrations; appendices, bibliographical note; index
Paperbound, $22.50 ISBN 0-938420-77-1

New from the MdHS Press!

African American Leaders of Maryland: A Portrait Gallery

By Suzanne E. Chapelle and Glenn O. Phillips



Written by two professors of history at Morgan State University, *African American Leaders of Maryland* begins with a concise, informative overview of Maryland's nationally important African American history. Following the introduction are forty-five individual portraits (suitable for framing, if desired) accompanied by mini-biographies of these distinguished abolitionists, soldiers, teachers, religious leaders, writers, doctors, politicians, sports figures, and community leaders. The book is geared to the reading public but is also language accessible for younger students.

168 pages; illustrated; index
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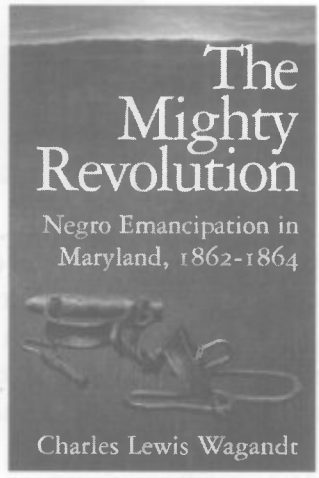
The Mighty Revolution: Negro Emancipation in Maryland, 1862–1864

By Charles Lewis Wagandt



Originally published by the Johns Hopkins University Press in 1964, and long regarded as the classic study of the politics that made Maryland the first southern state to voluntarily end slavery during the Civil War, this long out-of-print monograph constitutes a fundamental piece of Maryland's written history. The Press at the MdHS is especially pleased to bring back what can only be called a basic Maryland book.

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